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National manifestation of an international idea:
Multi-sectoral approaches to stunting reduction
and the transfer of nutrition policy to Zambia

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Summary

This qualitative work situates international nutrition policy and practice as an arm of modern international development, and traces the impact of evolving international agendas on the nutrition policy process in Zambia. The study is informed by an agenda setting framework emerging from studies of global health, and methods of data collection and analysis then draw from several different traditions. Critical anthropological approaches are used in understanding international nutrition agendas, with discourse analysis applied to critique the formulation of international nutrition priorities. Policy science theories of policy transfer and advocacy coalitions are then applied in assessing the Zambian policy process, combining insights from social network mapping, document review and key informant interviews. The findings from both approaches are synthesised narratively, following key concepts through international, national and local levels of the policy process and drawing out broader implications for nutrition policy and practice in low income countries.

This research provides several original contributions to the nutrition policy process literature: First, a critical analysis of why the international nutrition system has come to focus on its current interpretation of valid nutrition actions, explained through the need for strategic ambiguity of policy aims to appeal to multiple constituencies, and the rendering technical of malnutrition through privileging of certain forms of scientific knowledge. Second, an analysis of how the nutrition policy agenda in Zambia has been set through significant input from external actors, with policy ideas transferred from international to national policy realms by a range of mechanisms. Third, an analysis of why, while Zambia has adopted certain nutrition policies, the country is funding and implementing a different set of programmes with a focus on food security, with a clear split between advocacy coalitions addressing hunger or malnutrition. Forth, a critical analysis of dimensions of power and legitimacy in Zambian nutrition policy networks, in particular the dominance of international organizations in the setting of national nutrition policy, and a lack of participation of the hungry and malnourished in defining nutrition policy priorities. Finally, an exploration of rights-based approaches for their potential to address some of the issues uncovered in the Zambian nutrition policy process, in particular their ability to enhance legitimacy through increased participation and accountability, and to reconcile discourse and action on hunger and malnutrition, both of which remain significant problems in Zambia and elsewhere.

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Foreword

In 2006, on a summer trip to Ecuador in the middle of an undergraduate degree in human nutrition, I discovered a wonderful book. *Mountains Beyond Mountains* (Kidder 2003) tells the life history of Paul Farmer, Harvard anthropologist and physician to rural Haitians, and his story was the final push I needed in deciding that I wanted to dedicate my life to international humanitarian nutrition. In 2008, the year that malnutrition rose to the top of international development agendas, I graduated from a master's degree in public health nutrition and began my international career.

A decade later, after working for international aid agencies and international research institutes, I am somewhat disenchanted with what the international nutrition world – for all its wonderful people and positive intentions – has produced in terms of both process and outcomes for reducing hunger and malnutrition. In writing this dissertation, I reached again for Paul Farmer, for his own book, *Pathologies of Power* (2003). And I found in there what I could probably have found in his biography a decade earlier, had I been looking for it: A commentary on the structural forces that keep poor Haitians sick, and that keep poor Zambians hungry, even in the face of so much development and humanitarian action. It turns out, anthropologists have been writing about deficiencies in the development world in general – and even the international nutrition world in particular – for some time, with similar findings on the limits of knowledge expounded by experts trained as I have been trained, concurrently enabling and constraining practice; the 'rendering technical' of inherently political problems; and the lack of participation of the sick and hungry themselves in defining solutions.

There are undoubtedly technical health and agricultural interventions that can ameliorate the complex and intractable conditions of illness, hunger and malnutrition in poor countries, but the solutions that are ultimately made available are generally those that fit with the prevailing agendas of the powerful rather than necessarily those with the most potential to impact particular communities or change the *status quo*, and even these partial remedies will continue to be out of reach to most (even with the intervention of aid) unless and until existing structural and political inequalities are addressed. There are many great people working in international nutrition, and some fantastic minds, some of whom have already called for more attention to issues of power and politics in our policy agendas, and to internal culture in our field. What I hope I have achieved with this research is to add to those calls, including some detail for the international nutrition community on how this may be achieved, and demonstrating with reference to Zambia that without that attention, we are doing a disservice not only to ourselves, but to those we purport to help.

1 Introduction: locating nutrition

The year 2008 is acknowledged as something of a watershed moment for international nutrition. Researchers, many of whom had been working on nutrition issues over long and illustrious careers, recognised that a critical mass of understanding and experience had been accumulated and now needed to be marshalled if the community was to move forward in a coherent manner, with the aim of reducing the burden of malnutrition in some of the world's poorest countries. The resulting publications, the 2008 *Lancet* series on maternal and child undernutrition (Black, Allen et al. 2008, Bryce, Coitinho et al. 2008, Morris, Cogill et al. 2008), presented a summary of current scientific knowledge on the causes and consequences of, and interventions for, undernutrition. They also presented some key organising concepts around which they suggested the nutrition community could coalesce, such as the importance of reaching children in the first thousand days between conception and age two for most impact; the utility of measuring stunted growth as an indicator of chronic malnutrition and of human development more broadly; and the consequences of inaction on stunting for national economic and social development. Later in the same year, the Copenhagen Consensus group published its second listing of prioritized development investments based on cost-benefit analyses; five malnutrition interventions featured in the top ten of thirty efficacious development actions, giving further impetus to the field (Copenhagen Consensus Center 2008). Coming in the same year as the global financial and food price crises and a focus on food security at the 2008 G8 meeting, the role of these normative publications in advocacy efforts by academics and practitioners helped the issue of nutrition to ride the wave of political interest in food security more broadly, to secure its current place near the top of global development agendas.

Despite this increased international momentum for nutrition, there are still gaps to be addressed in our understanding of how and why certain agendas are set internationally – and beyond international agendas, how and why certain policies are prioritized in countries trying to reduce high burdens of malnutrition. The second *Lancet* series on undernutrition (five years after the first, in 2013) notes that in particular, assessments of governance and policy processes have been relatively neglected in nutrition research, and that more contextual analyses on how to shape and sustain 'enabling environments' for nutrition policy is essential as the focus shifts toward action; these enabling environments have been defined as "*political and policy processes that build and sustain momentum for the effective implementation of actions that reduce undernutrition*" (Gillespie, Haddad et al. 2013, pp.83). Recent papers have called for not just more research into the political and institutional determinants of

malnutrition, but also more nuanced research, considering in particular the internal and external framing of nutrition issues to set global and national agendas, and power relations between nutrition actors in the policy process in specific country case-studies (Hoey and Pelletier 2011, Gillespie, Haddad et al. 2013, Nisbett, Gillespie et al. 2014).

In this study I therefore argue that if the nutrition sector wants to achieve its goal of reducing malnutrition sustainably and in all its forms, nutrition actors need to understand what is driving nutrition policy from multiple perspectives: political and social as well as technical. In this policy process research, I trace the path of international nutrition policy narratives – propagated in the international development realm – into the national policy of Zambia as a country experiencing a high burden of multiple forms of malnutrition. Using the concept of advocacy coalitions to understand the idea of policy transfer, I look at how different conceptions of power affect what is transferred into national policy, and what this means for the legitimacy of international networks intervening in the national policy space.

After introducing key concepts in policy research in chapter 1, and the empirical methods used in this study in chapter 2, this study therefore investigates the nutrition policy process at different levels. First, in chapter 3, international nutrition aims are situated as part of the broader development endeavour, globally and historically, as seen through the anthropology of development literature. Changes in the way malnutrition and its solutions have been defined internationally over time are explored, as well as implications of this for international nutrition practice. Second, after providing information on Zambia's national context in chapter 4, chapters 5 and 6 discuss historical and contemporary changes in nutrition policy in Zambia, situated in what we already know about creating political space and policy action for health and development issues through the policy process literature. The interaction of international aims with national political economy factors is considered, and how these interactions have set certain agendas for nutrition which have changed over time. Two particular policy science frameworks are applied in order to understand the role of actors and ideas in the policy process. Finally, in chapter 7, the study synthesises findings from the international and national studies, using insights from the anthropology of development literature to complement the policy science study in exploring questions of the power and legitimacy of different players in Zambian nutrition policy. The final chapter ends with an exploration of potential future options for political and policy action in nutrition that might apply both in Zambia and elsewhere.

1.1 Situating practice: how nutritionists see nutrition

According to nutritionists' consensus definitions, every country on the planet has populations afflicted with malnutrition in its different forms, and one third of all people are malnourished (IFPRI 2016). Broadly defined, malnutrition can relate to a lack or an over-abundance of energy, macronutrients (protein, carbohydrates and fats) or micronutrients (vitamins, minerals and trace elements), available to an individual through a combination of dietary intake and the body's physiological ability to use what is eaten. Probably the most recognized form of malnutrition is hunger (technically known as undernourishment), defined as not having enough energy (calories) available from food each day for an active life. Hunger is prevalent seasonally in many contexts, in lean agricultural periods of the year, affecting about one billion people in the world today; in extreme cases, particularly where conflict prolongs or exacerbates hunger gaps, outright famine (acute and general failure of access to food in a specific area) can result (FAO 2015).

Beyond hunger, undernutrition (lacking in nutrients or the ability to use them) can be defined as chronic or acute, and is usually of concern in children as the population group most likely to have adverse consequences through life, and most likely to be able to make up deficits if addressed (Gibson 2005). Chronic, long-term undernutrition leads to stunting, or short stature (statistically assessed as beyond 2 z-scores below the mean height of a healthy reference population for a given age (WHO Multicentre Growth Reference Study Group 2006). Stunting tends to start early in life (even in the womb) and is largely irreversible after 2 years of age, thus the nutrition community coined the memorable term 'the first 1000 days' from conception to age two as the window of opportunity in which to intervene to prevent stunting, thus reducing the traditional intervention period for health programmes of a child's first five years (Ruel, Menon et al. 2008). Stunting has negative implications for cognitive development as well as height, and therefore impacts on education and has long-ranging effects on health and productivity into adulthood (Hoddinott, Maluccio et al. 2008). Around 23 percent of children under age five are stunted globally, or 156 million children (UNICEF 2016). Acute short-term or recurrent malnutrition leads to wasting, or thinness (statistically assessed as beyond 2 z-scores below the mean weight of a healthy reference population for a given height (WHO Multicentre Growth Reference Study Group 2006); wasted individuals have a sharply increased risk of infection and death, and wasting can be treated through community or clinical management where this is available. Around 7 percent of children under five globally are wasted, or 50 million children (UNICEF 2016).

At the other end of the scale, overweight and obesity are also types of malnutrition ('overnutrition'), increasing various health risks such as diabetes and heart disease (IFPRI 2016). While rates of stunting and wasting are falling globally, if slowly, rates of overweight are rising, with 6 percent of children under five currently overweight, or 42 million children (UNICEF 2016). Existing alongside any of these forms of malnutrition is micronutrient malnutrition (also called 'hidden hunger'), a lack of specific vitamins, minerals and trace elements necessary for health. The most common micronutrient deficiencies measured in development contexts are iron deficiency (anaemia), vitamin A deficiency, zinc deficiency, and iodine deficiency, which have a range of adverse health impacts, but for which good current global estimates of prevalence are difficult to determine (IFPRI 2016).

Nutrition in development is largely concerned with the prevention and treatment of the various forms of malnutrition reviewed above, but the definition and prioritization of these different types of malnutrition and understanding of their determinants (and therefore appropriate interventions) has been a decades-long discussion within the nutrition community. An important tool in the struggle for clear definitions of nutrition concepts, the long-standing UNICEF nutrition framework (UNICEF 1990) and subsequent revisions (Black, Victora et al. 2013), identifies diet (nutrient intake) and health status (ability to utilize nutrients in the body) as the immediate determinants of any of these nutrition outcomes. Underpinning these are the 'underlying determinants' of sufficient quantity and quality of food, adequate health services and hygiene, and appropriate childcare and feeding practices (UNICEF 1990). Known by nutritionists in shorthand as 'food, health and care', satisfactory access to these three broad elements is needed for achieving adequate nutritional status in children (Black, Allen et al. 2008). The public goods and services relating to the underlying determinants of food, health and care will necessarily be available from a range of sectors – particularly the food and agriculture sector, and the health sector – and it is currently thought by many in the field that these need to be provided in a coordinated fashion for maximum effect (Garrett and Natalicchio 2011). However, the underlying determinants of malnutrition are normally tackled separately by different sectors, with isolated programs derived from separate institutions and implemented by government ministries or nongovernmental organizations with separate resources, frameworks, and approaches, and often little coordination or acknowledgement of common aims (World Bank 2006).

The most recent *Lancet* series on undernutrition has called for interventions required to achieve direct, nutrition-specific actions (whose primary objective is to address nutrition, and that target the immediate causes of undernutrition: diet and disease); alongside broader,

multi-sectoral, nutrition-sensitive programming and policies (whose primary objective is not nutrition, but that have the potential to improve nutrition through addressing or considering underlying aspects of food, health and care) (Ruel, Alderman et al. 2013). This effectively divides action among the health sector and other relevant sectors, particularly agriculture as the producer of food, in a multi-sectoral response, and has also led to a divergence in food-based and treatment-based regimes for tackling malnutrition (Thompson and Amoroso 2014). Aligning objectives and resources of different sectors for maximum impact is seen by many who work in nutrition policy and programming as a potentially potent, though complex, mechanism for addressing the multidimensional causes of malnutrition.

The issue of hunger is treated slightly differently by nutritionists to the other types of malnutrition reviewed above. This is largely because hunger has historically been the dominant nutrition issue for the international development community, and nutritionists have had to work hard to get the other nutrition issues recognized by funders and development agencies, and so have to some extent marginalized the issue of hunger in their own work, appending it instead to the issue of food security. Approaches to addressing hunger have traditionally relied on increasing the availability of calories through staple foods, either by changing local agricultural practices to improve yields, as in the Asian Green Revolution (Hazell 2009); or through direct provision of imported food commodities to affected populations, though this practice has been characterized as ‘grain-dumping’ or preferential commercial transactions by overproducers such as the USA (Oxfam 2005). In addition to these purely practical approaches to reducing hunger, there are major political movements in several countries pushing for food sovereignty or the right to food, based less on the outcomes of entitlements and access to food, and more on achieving an inclusive political process to secure them (Beuchelt and Virchow 2012). The Green Revolution approach to staple food production for food security and hunger reduction is still promoted by many researchers and agronomists internationally, and in many agricultural agencies and ministries, and a ‘Green Revolution for Africa’ is now being sought (Quiñones, Borlaug et al. 1997)¹. This is not without its critics in the nutrition community, who note the need for diversity of diets beyond staple grains, and the dominance of agribusiness in commercialized agriculture (African Centre for Biosafety 2013). Thus the divergence of food security approaches to hunger, and multi-sectoral approaches to malnutrition, remains.

¹ See also the Gates Foundation-supported Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA): <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Resources/Grantee-Profiles/Grantee-Profile-Alliance-for-a-Green-Revolution-in-Africa-AGRA>

The immediate (diet and health status) and underlying (food, health and care) determinants of malnutrition and hunger are in turn underpinned in the UNICEF framework by often-cited but still under-researched political, economic and social determinants of nutrition policy and practice (Gillespie, Haddad et al. 2013, Nisbett, Gillespie et al. 2014), which are a major focus of this dissertation and explored further in the coming chapters. Together, the key concepts reviewed above – the categorization and prioritization of different types of malnutrition; the UNICEF framework for the conceptualization of malnutrition’s determinants and therefore valid interventions; and the potential actions of different sectors in addressing malnutrition – broadly shape how nutrition is understood and addressed in a major part of the international nutrition system. Not every nutrition researcher or practitioner agrees with the prioritization of particular concepts or interventions however, and the final paper in the 2008 *Lancet* undernutrition series implicitly recognized the differences in philosophies and opinions that exist within the nutrition world, and took the nutrition community to task for its disordered governance, urging better coordination and a focus on the core messages and actions identified by the authors (Morris, Cogill et al. 2008). Disagreements remain, and are discussed in chapter 3, but the preceding discussion has provided an overview of the normative and conceptual basis for current international nutrition policy and practice.

1.2 Emerging trends: nutrition policy process research

In order to address the lack of examination of political and policy environments affecting malnutrition, researchers have in recent years started to build a body of research on nutrition policy processes, after early attempts to highlight the political nature of food security policymaking did not gain traction in the majority of the nutrition research and policy community (Clay and Schaffer 1984, Pinststrup-Andersen 1993). Work explicitly focused on policy processes, but not based on established policy science theories or frameworks, started to emerge after 2000, with practical and operational findings on the need for improved capacity, spending and collaboration in the nutrition sector (Gillespie, McLaughlan et al. 2003); and the importance of political commitment to an issue such as nutrition which is not seen as politically pressing (Heaver 2005, Engesveen, Nishida et al. 2009, Haddad 2012). The 2008 *Lancet* series also explicitly addressed political economy concerns, calling for more coherence, political capacity, and accountability in the international nutrition system (Morris, Cogill et al. 2008); and improved leadership, advocacy and capacity at national level (Bryce, Coitinho et al. 2008). Much of this work since 2000 has been normative in nature, synthesising secondary data to formulate practical recommendations, rather than empirical work grounded in primary data.

Only in the last ten years has nutrition policy process work emerged that has a foundation in established policy science and empirical studies of national policy processes. Much of this more recent nutrition policy process research has taken its cue from a fairly narrow section of literature in the public health policy and health systems research field, most notably the work of Shiffman and Smith (2007), applying their framework for assessing issue framing in global health networks, and drawing on the policy frameworks of Clark (2002) and Kingdon (1984). Both Kingdon and Shiffman focus on the agenda setting stage of the process, thus much nutrition policy process work built on these frameworks does also, with many empirical findings echoing earlier normative work on the importance of framing, advocacy, commitment and capacity (Pelletier, Menon et al. 2011, Pelletier, Frongillo et al. 2012, Harris, Frongillo et al. 2017), but adding theoretical depth. A second major focus of nutrition policy work has been multi-sectoral coordination, as intervention from different sectors is considered to be particularly important in nutrition, which explicitly crosses the fields of health and agriculture, among others. An early review of the coordination literature (Harris and Drimie 2012) found three broad barriers to inter-sectoral collaboration for nutrition which mirror findings on lack of political attention to the sector more broadly: low political commitment and mobilization; sector-bound organizational structures and weak coordinating bodies; and lack of human resources and capacity. This is also seen in empirical case studies from several countries (Benson 2008, Mejia Acosta and Fanzo 2012). The third focus has been on more overtly political economy dimensions of the policy environment (Natalicchio, James Garrett et al. 2009, Mejia Acosta and Fanzo 2012, Reich and Balarajan 2012, Balarajan and Reich 2016): Recent studies of the political economy of nutrition policy have again identified similar themes, including the fragmentation of the nutrition system with lack of coordination at all levels; the lack of a natural institutional home for nutrition due to its multi-causal nature; the multiplicity of narratives around nutrition from various interested (if not responsible) parties; and the limited capacity of technically-trained nutritionists to manage the political aspects of nutrition policymaking. In reviewing nutrition policy process research, Gillespie, Haddad et al. (2013) identify the themes of narratives and framing; political economy of actors and ideas; and capacity and resources to be common throughout both the earlier normative work and the later empirical work.

The nutrition policy process literature to date, both normative and empirical, has therefore focused on elucidating practical policy challenges and opportunities for nutrition, perhaps due to the base of most of its key authors in implementation science and policy-oriented research for nutrition; nutrition policy process research has yet to contribute a great

deal to the theoretical policy science literature or development studies work more broadly (Nisbett, Gillespie et al. 2014). Thus nutrition policy process research is still in its infancy as a field of study, but is starting to learn from related disciplines to start to build more political insight. Nutrition policy process research emerging from nutritionists themselves has so far engaged mostly with traditional policy science approaches, but some have argued recently that such approaches can only take us so far in understanding how the nutrition world works, with '*greater potential to bring more development perspectives or wider social thought into the field of nutrition politics*' remaining (Nisbett, Gillespie et al. 2014, pp. 426). Providing a different lens on international action in recent years, anthropologists of development have engaged with the implications of the current international nutrition system, critiquing many of the core assumptions of the field in an effort to bring more reflective action in the international nutrition system (Kimura 2013, Jaspars 2016).

Thus early policy process work in the field focussed on food security as distinct from nutrition, and it was only as nutritionists themselves clarified their conceptual distinctions between food security and nutrition in development, and pushed for nutrition as a separate and defined field of research and practice, that policy process work focussed on nutrition policy started to emerge after 2000. This work generally arose from nutrition researchers themselves however, rather than from policy scientists with an interest in nutrition, and so was not generally based on established policy science theories or frameworks. Only after 2010 did nutrition policy process research appear that had a foundation in established policy science, taking its cue from the field of health policy and applying a small range of theories and frameworks. Very recently, a critical literature on nutrition policy processes, particularly in the international sphere, has started to emerge, drawing on anthropological approaches deriving from broader development studies work. The current study builds on the totality of this literature, and uses insights from the anthropology of development literature as well as the broader policy science literature, reviewed below.

1.3 Frameworks and stages or deconstructing power? Policy process approaches

Some of the core issues in this research – related to the broad area of public policy – have been studied in different ways by different disciplines, and it is useful to understand the different approaches that inform the current study. Specific theories and methods used in the research are introduced later in the dissertation, as they become relevant to the analysis, but this section reviews approaches to policy process research from different traditions.

The largest dichotomy in approaches to researching the policy process has been between primarily quantitative approaches, aiming to predict the causal drivers of emergence of different policies; and primarily qualitative approaches, aiming to understand how processes of policymaking are themselves created (DeLeon 1998). It has been argued that the quantitative social sciences have not in fact been able to demonstrate a predictive capacity or to settle important outstanding policy debates in such a complex field, and that the role of policy sciences might rather be to stimulate debate and provide critical input into the political process of policy deliberation (Fischer 1998). Notwithstanding the large and influential body of quantitative policy science work, and the several mixed-methods studies that attempt to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches (Mooji and de Vos 2003), this study takes a qualitative and investigative approach rather than trying to test existing hypotheses, and so does not review the quantitative policy science work here.

This work concentrates on the large and growing body of qualitative literature on the policy process. Even within this field however, there are differing epistemological positions, and differing views of what constitutes a useful contribution to debates and understanding. What we might call ‘traditional’ approaches to researching how policy change happens emerge from the policy and political sciences, generally taking either a positivist or interpretivist epistemological lens (though rarely explicitly stating which). These studies often include the application of generalized frameworks to break the policy process down into manageable chunks for empirical work, and the application of various qualitative methods to investigate the process and its actors, and find out how it works. Concurrently, a more ‘critical’ approach to public policy emerges from the field of anthropology, explicitly taking an interpretivist stance. Both the ‘anthropology of policy’ and ‘anthropology of development’ movements aim to apply ethnographic or critical approaches to bureaucratic policy domains, to deconstruct

and interpret the social world behind policy decisions and make explicit the meanings hidden behind policy narratives. Both 'traditional' and 'critical' approaches are used in different analyses within the current study.

Keeley and Scoones (1999, pp. 3-4) summarize the history of qualitative research on policy processes from both traditions: *'The traditional starting point for defining policy is that policy constitutes the decisions taken by those with responsibility for a given policy area, and these decisions usually take the form of statements or formal positions on an issue, which are then executed by the bureaucracy.... Rather than seeing policy as simply a single decision implemented in a linear fashion, many observers have noted that, in practice, policies generally consist of a broad course of action (or inaction, for that matter) or a web of interrelated decisions which evolve over time during the process of implementation. Policy also needs to be seen as an inherently political process, rather than simply the instrumental execution of rational decisions'*. Very broadly, three approaches to the policy process can be identified historically within the qualitative traditions, each taking a different view on how policy-making works and how it may be studied (Keeley and Scoones 1999, Cairney 2012): the policy cycle model; the concept of the active agent; and the critical approach.

First, the policy cycle. Traditional policy research tends to focus on analysing written policy and the processes and actors that lead to its creation and subsequently its implementation (Shore, Wright et al. 2011). While acknowledging that the route to making and implementing policy is often disordered and even chaotic – as Lindblom (1959) put it, 'the science of muddling through' – there have been models proposed in traditional policy process research that try to bring some order to the process so that it may be studied. Many of these models take as a starting point the work of Lasswell (1971) and Jones (1970), which informed what today are seen as generic models of how the policy process should, in theory, proceed through a process of agenda setting; policy formulation and legitimization; implementation; and evaluation and review. These stages are generally acknowledged to exist in any policy process, even if the order of the process is more iterative than linear; for instance continued agenda setting often accompanies (rather than precedes) each of these stages, as learning is fed back and original policy aims are subverted or changed (Keeley and Scoones 1999). Linear approaches distinguish the process of taking a policy decision from the process of implementing the chosen policy, with a 'top-down' focus and assumption of a bureaucratic process that expects generally rational behaviour of policy actors. The policy cycle is a useful

heuristic device for breaking an often complex process down into manageable parts for study, but the idea has been strongly critiqued for misrepresenting as linear and ordered what in practice can be an iterative and untidy process (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993), and more recently has been dismissed as subject to ‘devastating criticisms’ regarding its lack of casual power, top-down focus, and simplistic representations of both the stages of the cycle and the complexity of inter-related processes that some feel mean it has outlived its usefulness (Sabatier 2007). As Paul Cairney observes in his influential policy science blog series² however, *‘It is easy to reject the empirical value of the policy cycle, but difficult to replace it as a practical tool’*. Despite broad acknowledgement that the ‘stages’ heuristic is flawed, it maintains an allure for its simplicity and its intuitive nature, and the concept has been adapted, used or rejected to suit the specifics of different research. The idea of policy stages is still used in much policy process work today to guide research and conceptualize the research landscape (even if some stages receive less attention than others (Berlan, Buse et al. 2014)), but is generally not used as a singular framework; within this stylized model of the policy process, the focus of research is usually on specific areas according to the policy context and the specific policy issue of interest.

A second approach therefore recognises that rather than a chain of rational bureaucratic choices and subsequent faithful implementation and logical adjustment, policy decisions may be distorted and undermined (or improved) by the agency of actors at any of these stages, with bureaucrats and policy entrepreneurs engaging in constant negotiation and alteration in a ‘bottom-up’ fashion that changes the practical expression of written policy (Kingdon 1984). This is most famously embodied in Lipsky’s (1980) description of ‘street-level bureaucrats’, with frontline government workers or other implementers in effect forming a second layer of policy decision-makers, with discretion over how policy is interpreted and implemented day-to-day. Even with all the political will in the world, those tasked with enacting written policy rarely have the time, resources or capacity to fulfil everything that is nominally required of them, and so these frontline workers influence policy implementation by taking every day pragmatic decisions in order to find a balance between satisfying the demands of government policy; fulfilling the requirements of clients and citizens; and preserving professional autonomy and morale (Cairney 2012). Lipsky’s work finds that there is

² Paul Cairney: <https://paulcairney.wordpress.com/2016/05/21/policy-in-500-words-if-the-policy-cycle-does-not-exist-what-do-we-do/>

therefore a disconnect between intended legislative goals and actual policy outcomes as these mid-level actors undertake unsanctioned coping strategies, routines and simplifications (Lipsky 2010), and others have also noted the need to recognize the complexity of interpretation, bargaining and local environments in policy implementation in practice (Cairney 2012). This theory renders these frontline actors as policy-shapers in their own right, whether or not their views were taken into consideration in the original process of agenda setting and policy formulation as expressed in the policy cycle model.

A critique of both the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches is that neither has explicitly addressed the issue of power in ways that are satisfactory to critical researchers (Keeley and Scoones 1999). A third approach therefore brings in a critical study of power, with anthropological approaches building particularly on the work of Foucault (Foucault 1966, Foucault 1969) in addressing the different forms of power existing across different actors and spaces and at different times throughout the policy process, and in particular the relationship between knowledge and power. This critical approach applies the tools of anthropology – particularly immersion in a particular context, and investigation of the meaning, symbolism and cultural history of ideas themselves – to policy worlds and how ideas intervene in social processes, in order to shed light on the power of different groups and how this is held (Shore, Wright et al. 2011). Critical approaches to studying the policy process reject the definition of policy as rational solving of a social problem, asserting instead that not only is policy an instrument to regulate people from the top down, but also that policy influences how people see themselves, and thus is a political technology that controls populations through the agency of individuals themselves, masked in neutral and technical language (Shore, Wright et al. 2011). Policy in the critical tradition is seen through the lens of power, and in particular who has the power to define agendas through power over the language and knowledge used in policy systems (Brock, Cornwall et al. 2001). Policy anthropology generally takes a broad view of the historical and contemporary situation of specific policy areas, and interrogates ideas that are often taken for granted in traditional policy work, in order to situate policy as a contested field amenable to study through the lens of power (Wedel and Feldman 2005). Critiques of this third 'critical' approach in turn claim that it is strongly theoretical and often lacks empirical focus, positioning the analyst in a privileged position as an observer and as uniquely placed to understand what is going on in the policy process (Cairney 2012).

There are many similarities between these three broad approaches to understanding the policy process, as well as differences. In particular, all three qualitative approaches emphasise the importance of context – historical, geographical, bureaucratic, and societal – as integral to the study of policy processes, and all three have been applied in multiple different contexts. Policy process research emerged in looking at the problems of the developed world, and authors have questioned whether concepts fostered in that realm can be applied unproblematically in research in developing country contexts (Pye 1958). In addressing this issue, Horowitz (1989) observes that while there may be differences between developed and developing countries in the environment in which policy is made – for instance institutions, participants, resources, issues, and state influence and capacity – which need to be acknowledged and studied, the different elements of the policy process are equally applicable in either context – for instance the concepts of policy constraints, policy windows, and unanticipated consequences – in his view due to commonalities in human problem solving in highly structured contexts. Thus policy process research in any context needs to describe the policy and political environment, as well as exploring more deeply the different elements and mechanisms which explain policy outcomes.

Further, each approach recognises similar types of actors – broadly, the state, private sector, and citizens and civil society – but assumes different relationships between them; views the role of their beliefs and ideas differently; and treats power in different ways. In particular, critical approaches tend to privilege the idea of structure – understood as powerful social forces such as cultural norms, relationships, language and expectations that condition action – as much as traditional policy science tends to privilege agency – understood as the power of individuals to express their will or beliefs.

Finally, all three approaches note the importance of power in the policy process, though power is conceived in different ways in policy studies from different fields. Power in different approaches is conceptualized as a negative and limiting force of ‘power over’ or a positive and enabling force as ‘power to’; as held by distinct actors (elitism) or as diffuse in different forms across networks (pluralism); as relations based on limiting valid forms of knowledge and language or as capital to be wielded in different fields; or as economic clout or as claim to moral authority (Gaventa 2003, Gaventa 2006, Islam 2009, Cairney 2012, Nisbett, Gillespie et al. 2014, Shiffman 2014, Shiffman 2015). Depending on the approach taken to study them, these forms of power are not seen to be mutually exclusive; they can be said to

exist at once and change over time, and be conditioned by the systems and structures in which they exist, and power in practice can therefore take many different forms.

The critiques and counter-critiques of different policy process research approaches perhaps reveal more of an epistemological than a methodological split, though over time the traditional and critical approaches have become closer, and modern public policy theory is engaged with a study of power that acknowledges both the power of ideas (as structuring policy decision-making) and the power of people (through asserting their agency) (Kettell and Cairney 2010). Traditional and critical approaches to understanding policy processes therefore bring different strengths and weaknesses to policy process research. As David Mosse writes, there are two paradigms of development policy, neither of which is completely true: the instrumental view of policy as problem solving, and the critical view of policy as revealing the technical and political goals of policy actors (Mosse 2005). Thus there are similarities in the concepts recognized to be important in the study of policy process from the qualitative traditions – including context, actors, ideas and power – but different ways of studying these, explored in the chapters below.

As there is no single unifying theory in public policy research (Cairney 2012), a broader reading of available policy science theory, along with a back-and-forth between what we might call traditional and critical approaches – both building insight and interrogating meaning – may therefore allow for a useful comprehension of policy processes from several vantage points. The current research takes a broad view of the context in which nutrition policies are made in terms of scales and sectors involved and, in trying to understand policy processes for nutrition, attempts to take on the challenge set by Keeley and Scoones (1999) and Cairney (2012), to combine different approaches to policy process research in order to gain insights from different perspectives, to see what each angle can add to our understanding. This study uses ideas from several of the approaches reviewed above, including the concept of a policy cycle in order to understand the different stages in the policy process, though explicitly recognizing that these stages are neither linear nor necessarily always distinguishable from each other; the notion of ideas as input to policy arising from different levels, including from those actors nominally tasked with implementing formulated policy; and the importance of assessing power in its various forms across the policy process.

2 Empirical basis: aims and methods

2.1 Research overview, aims and questions

This research evolved over six years from 2011 to 2016. The study initially intended to learn from a new institutional process for nutrition in one district of central Zambia, where an international NGO was facilitating the bringing together of different ministries at local level to catalyse multi-sectoral action on nutrition, and learning from the process. It became clear as the process progressed, however, that local action could not be understood without reference to the creation of national policy, as national nutrition policy both underpinned and was informed by this new multi-sectoral process, so it would be necessary to understand the national political and policy environment as the setting for this innovation. In subsequently investigating the national policy process, it further became clear that many of the ideas and agendas in Zambian nutrition policy were strongly influenced by the international nutrition community, and so it became important to recognise the broader context of nutrition in international development in order to understand Zambia's historical and contemporary treatment of the issue. Thus the original, local impetus for the research became one of many strands woven together to understand why nutrition policy is approached as it is today in Zambia, and the study became one undertaken at multiple levels: international, national and local. The final aim of this study was therefore to explore how and why certain international nutrition ideas and approaches have found their way into national nutrition policy and practice in Zambia; and therefore to contribute, through investigation of the case of nutrition policy in one country, to an understanding of policy processes more generally.

The first part of this study therefore describes, analyses and explains the evolution in ideas that have brought the international nutrition system to its current approach to malnutrition reduction, and the implications of this agenda for international nutrition policy and strategy. This research explores the question: *How has understanding of nutrition policy and practice evolved internationally over time, and how has changing international understanding affected the global agenda on nutrition?* The second part of the study assesses the implications of changing international ideas and agendas for nutrition policy and practice in high-burden countries, illustrated through the case of Zambia, and how these agendas interact with national contexts to influence national nutrition policy. This research explores the question: *How have international ideas about nutrition policy and practice arrived on Zambia's*

policy agenda; how have they been taken up, contested, changed or used in the Zambian context; and how has this affected national nutrition policy and practice?

To approach these questions, data were collected from all three levels in the form of published literature, key informant interviews, policy documents, social network maps, secondary numerical data, and direct observations of actors and events. Initial investigations (including interview guides and broad directions of enquiry) were informed by a guiding framework from the health policy literature focussing particularly on the agenda setting stage of the policy process. This initial focus on agenda setting was taken because the conceptual link between the different levels being explored was the travelling of ideas between the international and national policy worlds, and their influence on agendas. Primary thematic analysis (interview coding) was based on the same agenda setting framework as the initial investigations, thus the framework suggested the initial 'sensitizing concepts' for the analysis (Bowen 2006). As it became clear that Zambia's nutrition policy process had progressed beyond agenda setting and into other conceptual 'stages' of policy formulation and to some extent implementation, then further exploration of the data moved beyond this framework and brought in aspects of discourse analysis, framework analysis and narrative synthesis approaches. The work was iterative and reflexive, with data collection and analysis continuing over the six years of the study, and investigations at the different levels eventually ongoing at the same time; insights gained from one level or phase of the study therefore informed subsequent periods of data collection and analysis as the study evolved.

As the data were explored and synthesised and initial narratives developed, a broad reading of the public policy literature suggested several different theories that might shed theoretical light on the emerging empirical findings. In the absence of a single, unifying theory of public policy, Cairney (2013) suggests that combining the insights of multiple theories may produce new perspectives and new research agendas that bring fresh understanding to policy process issues. He identifies three approaches that might be taken in combining theory: Synthetic, in which several theories may be combined in order to produce a single meta-theory to apply to an issue; complementary, in which different conceptual lenses are applied to explicitly provide different perspectives on an issue; and contradictory, in which theories are compared for their explanatory value for an issue before one is chosen as superior. The qualitative and critical approach of this research suggests an interest in understanding different perspectives on a phenomenon, and thus chooses to apply a complementary

approach to theory combination. This study eventually applied theories of policy discourse, policy transfer, and advocacy coalitions in order to understand the policy process in both empirical and theoretical depth. The different theories are however underpinned by different epistemological assumptions, as discussed in chapter 1, so the study applied these theories through two distinct methodological approaches – the analysis of discourse within the international nutrition system through a critical anthropological approach; and the analysis of national policy processes for nutrition through a traditional policy science approach – in order to gain insight into the entire policy process from different analytical perspectives. These two approaches were then brought together in the final analysis, where theories of power and legitimacy informed the discussion and conclusions.

The current work therefore has three dimensions directing its overall approach: The concept of different levels at which actors operate and policy ideas emerge; the concept of multiple different perspectives in different data sources providing empirical insight into the policy processes studied; and the concept of multiple different theoretical perspectives combining to provide theoretical insight into the policy process. The sections below describe the approaches and methods in more detail.

2.2 Philosophical approach, positionality, and ethics

This is an entirely qualitative study, aiming to provide fresh insight and a stimulus to debate around research and practice in the international nutrition policy world. The study has its roots in the traditional policy process literature to which nutrition researchers have contributed, but – while not claiming to be an anthropological study – it also brings in concepts and ideas from the constructivist anthropological tradition to complement these approaches. Much nutrition policy process research to date has been epistemologically ambiguous, declining to declare (or in some cases perhaps not aware of) the lens it applies to its analyses. I therefore lay out below the philosophical approach of the current work, with some implications for the study.

I see policy processes as social practices constructed through collective interaction, yet which have real effects on people, and upon which people can have real effects; and as processes about which we can never have complete knowledge, yet about which it is possible to build understanding from different vantage points. Thus I am interested in different perspectives on the policy processes reviewed, in order to build a clearer picture of the multiple ways that people affect and are affected by these processes. This view lends itself to

the critical realist approach, a philosophy of science that offers itself as a 'third way' between positivist and constructivist traditions, therefore my engagement with much of the critical and traditional literature is itself critical, in that I do not always share the epistemological orientations of its authors. Where positivism broadly states that the only valid knowledge of an extant world is that which can be experienced, and constructivism holds that there is no reality but only particular perceptions, critical realism is described by its originator as having a realist ontology (that is, that the nature of reality is that it exists independent of an observer), a relativist epistemology (that the nature of knowledge is that there is no absolute truth, only subjective viewpoints) and a rationalist judgment (that reason is the source of knowledge) (Bhaskar 2008). This philosophy is appealing to those who feel that research into collective human behaviour (social science) cannot be reduced to a set of interacting variables in the way that perhaps the physical sciences can (as positivism would propose), but that a more knowable reality exists than that expressed solely through the views of individuals (as constructivism might suggest); realism holds that the material and social worlds are real, and have real effects that are experienced differently by different people, and that knowledge about these can be improved over time (Westhorp, Prins et al. 2011). The use of reason, and therefore the central place of the researcher and her reasoned thoughts in coming to conclusions, is important in critical realism. This is the way in which research can expose not only the empirical (what we are able to see), but to start to uncover the actual (what exists regardless of our ability to perceive it) and the real (what exists as possibility or potential); if we can identify what is absent from what is possible, we can become more active agents of change (Bhaskar 2008).

Critical realism is an emergent paradigm in organizational research, where enquiry focusses on the interplay of structure and agency as key to understanding societal outcomes (that is, how cultural norms and societal institutions, and individual capacity for free choice and action, have a bearing on resultant behaviours and their consequences) (Reed 2009). This philosophical approach guides this work: Acknowledging that different framings of the social world exist, but observing that these have real effects on what is done and what is experienced, and that elaborating this knowledge can build learning that enables improved action. From this perspective, we see that this research is a process of interpreting and synthesising different versions of similar events, and constructing an account that while it tries to stay close to the individual narratives – received through interviews and texts – rests also in my own interpretation and observations. In order to build a picture of policy processes

drawing on multiple viewpoints, I have triangulated between accounts and observations, interrogated the meaning of often assumed concepts, and tried to be transparent about both agreements and conflicts in the data, as well as about the research process and my approach to analysis.

A key ethical and methodological issue in this study is therefore the position of the researcher within the research process, including interaction with potential research participants and influence over events that is outside of the research framework (Walt, Shiffman et al. 2008). The positionality of the researcher external to the events being studied is important in order to attempt an outsider stance, and to be able to stand back and recognize patterns that occur; but a position inside the community under study is important in order to understand culture and interpret research material in context, so reflexivity between these positions, which allows for different perspectives, can be useful (Gilson and Raphaely 2008, Walt, Shiffman et al. 2008, Hewitt 2009). In this work there are two closely-linked contexts: One in the world of international nutrition, and one in the Zambian nutrition policy community. Zambia is a relatively narrow policy context, with few key actors in the field of nutrition from national or international institutions. While certainly an outsider to Zambia (as a British woman), I am not a neutral observer in the world of international nutrition, nor in Zambian nutrition policy; I have been working in the international nutrition world for a decade, with training at international institutions of excellence, and have worked for several international NGOs and research institutes on nutrition issues. It is fair to say, then, that I have in my work and training been exposed predominantly to the dominant international narratives of the time, and have taken as my goals the key aims of the international nutrition sector. I have also been working in nutrition in Zambia in different capacities since 2008, and I was involved in the overall evaluation of the project from which this study emerged, and in various international, national and local level nutrition fora. I am therefore acquainted in some respect with many of the informants in this study, at different levels, and have long-standing professional and in some cases social relationships with policy and programme actors who have contributed to this research.

This arrangement has afforded closer engagement with nutrition processes, both internationally and in Zambia, and a good entry point and unique access to a range of potential participants. It has also provided an understanding of the context and processes taking place, with familiarity likely to lead to increased trust and therefore perhaps more candid responses

to interview questions. It is also likely however that I am seen as centrally involved in many nutrition policy processes in Zambia in particular, which would shape responses and information offered, and there was a chance that participants would be less likely to air certain issues knowing my personal viewpoints. Aware of this issue, in the analysis I try to use this dual positioning to reflect on both broad patterns and detailed context.

Another ethical point is possible risks. There are several levels of risk that could be associated with a research study: Risk to the person of the researcher; risk to those being researched; and risk to the aims of the research itself. Zambia remained a peaceful context without an unusually high level of personal hazard throughout the duration of this research; the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office notes no restrictions to travel in Zambia. There was a risk to the research itself if the information required could not be reliably collected, or if the prevailing organizational ethos was one of not disclosing information to outsiders. From experience working in this context over the past eight years, it was unlikely that this would have been the case as people have been found to be generally forthcoming and helpful to previous projects, though there is always the question of privately held vs publicly expressed views and beliefs. There was also a risk from the expectations that have been built around the project itself. This research is embedded in high-profile projects within Zambia and in the international nutrition community, and as such the projects were at risk of being commandeered for political ends by various stakeholders. It was again important to balance insider and outside perspectives, even while participating in national and international discussions on nutrition, which required a degree of concentration.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, the risks posed to informants to the study are predominantly professional, but potentially serious nonetheless. Respondents at all levels were asked questions about the organizations and situations within which they work, and some information may be sensitive. Adding complexity to professional risks, the community under study was to some extent my own community: those nutrition professionals who are engaged in national and international policy processes. Mosse (2011) writes about professional risks when the researcher is also a part of the professional community being researched, where contestation of findings can be less about the information revealed as about the way it is obtained, with feelings of betrayal of colleagues or of professional standards common. To address this risk, the research was explained in detail to respondents at the time of interviews, and all data were completely anonymized prior to publication; with small sample sizes and few

relevant people involved at each level, individuals could still be identified as having provided certain information however, and respondents were informed of this risk during consent procedures.

Formal ethical clearance for the research was sought and obtained within Zambia from the University of Zambia Social Sciences Review Board; through the University of London (SOAS) ethical review board as part of my PhD; and with the institutional review board of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) as partial funders of some of this work through my employment with them.

2.3 Methodological approaches and data

Just as there is no single theory of public policy, neither is there a single agreed set of methods or approaches to studying the policy process (Walt, Shiffman et al. 2008). Studies tend to be designed according to the requirements of funders or researchers and depend on the research questions defined, but previous reviews of policy process research in the field of global health have identified several recurring methodological issues with this body of literature, including absence of explicit conceptual frameworks; little detail on research design and methodology; limited use of theory; focus on description rather than explanation of processes; and a number of single case studies on particular issues rather than comparative or multi-site studies (Gilson and Raphaely 2008). Academics from several research traditions have identified a lack of attention in health policy process research to fundamental issues such as power and politics in the policy process, and call for the application of social science and development studies theory in order to better understand and explain the trajectory of policy processes (Farmer 2003, Gilson and Raphaely 2008, Erasmus, Orgill et al. 2014, Nisbett, Gillespie et al. 2014). Both critical and traditional approaches have therefore identified shortcomings in public policy research in low income country settings within the fields of health and nutrition, and call for similar methodological strengthening, if drawing from different epistemological positions. The current research, though certainly a single case study on a particular issue, aims to address a majority of these methodological issues by using and building on existing conceptual frameworks; explicitly incorporating the concepts of politics and power in understanding the policy process; and going beyond descriptive analysis through the application of different social science theories in order to ground and generalize the empirical findings.

The empirical researching of policy processes is acknowledged to be challenging in any context, and use of a detailed, contextualized, qualitative case-study involving different perspectives and methods is therefore encouraged (Cairney 2012). The case study approach has been defined as *‘an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’*, and case study methodology is advised when the type of research question is explanatory, explorative or descriptive; the extent of control over events by the researcher is low; and the study is of a (rare) contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context (Yin 2003, pp.13). Given my reading of the theoretical literature in chapter 1, my own philosophical approach outlined above, and the nature of the research questions, the current study is clearly best oriented to a qualitative case study methodology. The case under investigation was nutrition policy in Zambia, and selection of the case was based on both empirics and convenience: Zambia was a relevant case as a country with a high burden of various forms of malnutrition, signatory to various international nutrition covenants and strategies, and with an active nutrition policy process over the past decade; in addition, my work already focused on Zambia and I had several ongoing projects in the country from which I could draw data and for which I would have to make multiple visits to the country over the period of my PhD research.

This study therefore interacted with other research projects over its duration: I re-analysed international key informant interviews for this research which were originally undertaken for the Nourishing Millions project³, which aimed to understand the history of international nutrition, and for which I co-wrote an opening book chapter on the history of international nutrition (Gillespie and Harris 2016); I led the Zambia case study for the Stories of Change in Nutrition project⁴, which aimed to document experiential learning from six countries engaged in nutrition policy processes and so overlapped with a large part of the initial descriptive analysis at national level undertaken for the current study (Harris, Drimie et al. 2017); and I co-led the assessment of inter-sectoral coordination for the Realigning Agriculture to Improve Nutrition (RAIN) Project⁵, which aimed to produce learning on a multi-sectoral

³ Nourishing Millions project: <http://nourishingmillions.ifpri.info/>

⁴ Stories of Change in Nutrition project: http://www.transformnutrition.org/stories_of_change/

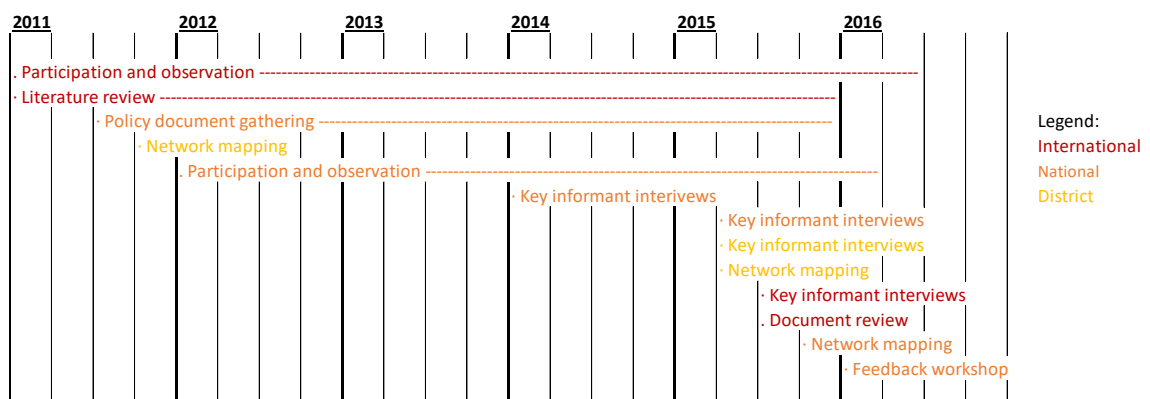
⁵ RAIN Project: <https://www.concern.net/en/about/our-work/rain-project>

institutional process in one district of Zambia and so fed into the local level analysis for this research (Drimie, Kumar Chakrabarty et al. 2014, Harris, Drimie et al. 2017).

2.3.1 Overview of data sources

Different sources of data – including interviews with key informants; social network maps showing the different policy actors and their links; and key documents including written policies and strategies, budget analyses, and published literature – were collected at international, national, and local (district) levels in order to build up a picture of the Zambian nutrition policy process. Data sources for the study and timing of data collection over the six year study are summarised in Figure 2.1. In addition, further published literature and publicly-available numerical survey data were reviewed and summarized in order to understand the broader context of nutrition, development, and politics in Zambia as a framing to the empirical qualitative analysis. Throughout the research process, participation in and observation of events and processes at each of the three levels were documented through notes and memos which also formed part of the analysis and informed the direction of the ongoing research.

Figure 2.1: Data sources and timings at three levels



Interviews

Interviews were undertaken with respondents at four different conceptual levels: International nutrition actors; international actors with strong links specifically to Zambia; national policy actors in Zambia; and local nutrition actors in one district of Zambia. Within these levels, potential respondents were identified and approached through a combination of their occupation of key positions in organizations working on nutrition; participation at key meetings and events for nutrition; and snowball sampling whereby respondents were asked to

identify others who might be able to provide information relevant to the study. Respondents came from financial donor organizations; UN agencies; civil society and NGOs; academia; government (including different ministries at different levels, and parliament); and the private sector. Interviews spanned five years from 2011 to 2015. Overall, 70 interviews with 61 different respondents were included across these levels and time points (summarized in Table 2.1; see Annex 1). Some respondents were interviewed on several different occasions over time, and some interviews included two respondents at once where respondents requested this. I undertook most of the interviews myself, with the exception of the 12 international actors, who were interviewed by a colleague working on the Nourishing Millions project using an interview guide into which I had significant input; and some of the national actors, who were interviewed by a consultant on the Stories of Change project using an interview guide I designed. A majority of respondents were interviewed in person, usually in their own offices; some international actors were interviewed by Skype.

Table 2.1: Summary of interview sources

Interview source	Number of interviews	Interview source	Number of interviews
<i>International actors</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>National actors</i>	<i>25</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donor • UN • Civil society (incl. NGO) • Academia 	1 3 1 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donor • UN • Civil society (incl. NGO) • Academia • Government • Private sector 	2 4 4 2 12 1
<i>International actors with strong links to Zambia</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Local actors</i>	<i>28</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donor • UN • Academia 	2 2 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil society (incl. NGO) • Government 	7 21
Total			70

Interviews at each level asked broadly about the respondent's history in nutrition and motivations for working in the sector; their thoughts on changes in attention and commitment to, and treatment of, nutrition issues over time; their understanding of the current policy or programmatic environment for nutrition (either internationally or nationally) and why it was the way it was; and any other issues around nutrition policy and action that they felt pertinent to the study. Specific questions were also asked that were relevant to each level; while there were semi-structured interview guides for the interviews at different levels (see Annex 2),

interviewers were also free to follow streams of information that emerged from the respondents themselves, while guiding the interview around the topic of the nutrition policy process in Zambia or internationally. All interviews were conducted in English, the working language of the international nutrition community and of government in Zambia, and were audio-recorded⁶. Recordings were transcribed verbatim in English by a third party transcriber, and then checked for accuracy and to fill in gaps as I listened to them in starting to undertake the analysis. Interviews at different levels were analysed differently, discussed below.

Social network maps

The policy process is shaped by the actors who participate in it, described as 'stakeholders' or those individuals, groups and organizations with an interest (stake) in the process and its outcomes (Brugha and Varvasovszky 2000). Collecting data on stakeholders and their intentions and interactions can therefore aid in understanding the range of actors involved in an issue, as a step towards understanding how they influence the issue. Stakeholder analysis has been used extensively in business, and in management research in particular, and there are many different ways to undertake a stakeholder analysis, one of which is social network mapping (Varvasovszky and Brugha 2000). Networks as a mode of organization and interaction are a recognized feature of international relations and national politics (Hafner-Burton, Kahler et al. 2009, Cairney 2012), and the makeup of networks accounts for at least some of the interaction between these two levels (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Thus networks are an important part of an assessment of policy processes, particularly in low-income countries where international development communities and national policy communities interact.

Stakeholder mapping methods can draw out information on those actors involved in an issue, their relative influence over the issue, and different links that bind the different actors (Eva Schiffer 2010). Network analysis is based on nodes (the different actors) and links (the relations between the actors), as well as being able to show visually other elements that describe the actor or organization being shown (such as sector) (Hanneman and Riddle 2005). The phenomenon of power is shown in network analysis in various ways: by the position of an actor in the network and so the access he has to others in the network (either centrality,

⁶ Where permission for recording was not given, detailed notes were taken and written up for analysis.

allowing connection to multiple other actors, or a position connected to marginal actors, and so a brokerage role); by an actor's ability to exit a network without ties that bind too strongly; and by the influence assigned to an actor by those elaborating the network with insider knowledge of the network (Schiffer and Waale 2008, Hafner-Burton, Kahler et al. 2009). Each of these forms of power may be illustrated on a network map – though these are only some of several potential forms of power in a policy process, others of which are studied through different methods.

A stakeholder mapping method that has been applied in policy research in low-income country contexts is the NetMap method (Schiffer 2007, Schiffer and Waale 2008, Schiffer and Hauck 2010). This method generates a drawn network map which helps both researchers and the actors involved in the map creation to determine which actors are involved in a given network, how they are linked, how influential they are, and what their goals are at a given point in time (Schiffer and Hauck 2010). The method involves the facilitation of respondents (in groups or individually) in creating drawn maps of actors in a policy network and their links, and assigning relative influence based on the respondents' understanding of the network (see Annex 3). In this research, the NetMap method was used at national level in 2015 to gain a cross-sectional view of organizations involved in nutrition-relevant policy and action, as well as their influence over the issue of nutrition policy, and links of 'accountability' between organizations. Stakeholder mapping was also undertaken in 2011 and 2015 in one district where multi-sectoral action for nutrition was being piloted, using a link of 'coordination' to assess changes in nutrition actors and coordination among them.

Social network maps are able to capture actors in several different forms, with individuals, groups or organizations forming the nodes on the maps. In this research, all network maps captured actors in the form of organizations (such as government ministries, NGOs or companies involved in the issue) rather than at any finer granulation. This decision was taken when designing the NetMap interviews for several reasons: the number of individual actors particularly at national level would likely have been too large to create a coherent map of individuals with utility for the analysis; individuals particularly at district level are replaced with regularity and therefore the map would be obsolete far faster if individuals were named; and ethical and data protection considerations would mean that the maps would not be available for dissemination if individuals were named. The decision to focus on organizations rather than individuals did however limit the analysis, particularly in showing

where different individuals within an organization held different beliefs or influence to each other, and some nuance was likely lost in the map in the pursuit of clarity and simplicity for the analysis.

Interview data for each separate mapping exercise were entered into matrices as ones (link exists) and zeroes (no link exists) in Excel software, and from these matrices social network maps were generated using the Visuallyzer network analysis software. This software facilitates the creation of social network maps with specified links and nodes, and allows for other actor properties to be overlaid. In this case, those creating the network maps were asked to assign an influence score to each actor to determine one aspect of actors' power over the nutrition policy process, and the actor's sector (nutrition, health, agriculture etc.) and type (government, private sector, civil society etc.) were also shown on the maps. Though there are methods described for the quantitative analysis of network maps (Hafner-Burton, Kahler et al. 2009), the NetMaps in this study were analysed qualitatively for both structure and content, assessing the position of different actors in relation to others and in light of their roles in the nutrition policy process, and the overall shape of the network in relation to actor interaction.

Document review

Formal written documents provided a data source that was an important foil to the often informal and impermanent data obtained through interviews. Document review is a key method in qualitative policy research, with documents providing an accessible account of the public face of policymaking (Bowen 2009). Documents of several types provided data on which parts of this study were based: Published academic literature, as well as providing background to the study as a whole, was used in parts of the research to trace the history of the field of nutrition; international donor policies and strategies relating to nutrition provided evidence as to the changing priorities of the international nutrition community; and national policy and strategy documents showed how nutrition has been treated in Zambia. Analysis of these documents included simple word counts to assess the prominence of different concepts, and narrative synthesis whereby commonalities among the written content were identified and summarized.

Observation and memos

A final method was to spend time participating in and observing nutrition policy debates and decisions in Zambia and internationally, in order to gain an understanding of these processes from my own perspective as well as through received perspectives of others,

and to derive ideas and theories of my own through an understanding of the context and an observation of those engaged in the process. Observation and participation in specific cultural contexts has a long tradition particularly as an ethnographic research method, with 'observer as participant' recognized as a potentially useful data collection method, notwithstanding potential validity issues from selective observation (Baker 2006). Further to observation, the creation of memos – detailed notes capturing observations, thoughts and emerging ideas and theories of the researcher in the field – is a foundation of qualitative and ethnographic research, and particularly the 'grounded theory' approach whereby staying close to the original data and context is paramount (Corbin and Strauss 1990, Strauss and Corbin 1990).

Reflexivity and an ability to go back and forth between insider/outsider positions provide key analytic tools in policy process research (Gilson and Raphaely 2008, Walt, Shiffman et al. 2008, Hewitt 2009). Thus the international nutrition system and the national nutrition policy network were treated as cultural contexts that could be experienced and observed, and about which I could create my own ideas as well as receiving the perspectives of others. My work over the past decade has involved being a part of the international nutrition community, affording me ample opportunity to observe and understand aspects of this world which I incorporated into my analysis. To understand the national policy process, I visited Zambia nine times over the course of six years for this research, spending between two weeks and three months in the country each time. During this time, I had the opportunity to participate in the daily life of middle-class Zambians; teach nutrition at the national university; talk to nutrition professionals across the national nutrition landscape both formally and in casual conversation; and attend meetings and workshops on many aspects of nutrition policy and practice in Zambia, at national and district levels. I therefore had opportunity to observe aspects of nutrition policy and practice from various angles, and throughout this time I kept notes and journals of my thoughts, reflections and observations which helped to shape the direction of the research.

2.3.2 International study: anthropology of development

The first part of this research took an exclusively international focus, aiming to bring insights from the critical anthropology of development literature to bear on a historical and contemporary reading of international nutrition ideas and practice. In contrast to development anthropology (which applies anthropological methods to addressing international development issues), this literature takes the development endeavour itself as the topic of

anthropological exploration, and has been expanding since the early 1990s. Taking a critical reflection on the practice of development, the anthropology of development literature asks such censorious questions as: if one major developmental goal is the alleviation of poverty, why is poverty on the increase; why is development invariably defined as something that originates externally rather than internally; and why is so much of planned development viewed as a failure (Gow 1996)?

The history of international nutrition is bound up with the history of international development, which emerged as an enterprise after the breakdown in former colonial systems and the political re-arrangements that took place as a result of World War II required new approaches for social and economic interactions between industrialised nations and their former colonies (Hobart 1993, Escobar 1995). Development has been broadly defined as planned social and economic change, and has variously been described as promoting the welfare of the people of former colonies (British Government 1965); fostering overseas investment opportunities (Escobar 1995); and promoting modernization (Eyben 2000). Each of these depictions tells part of the story of development: after initially being framed at a national level around the specific historical conditions of a country that made it 'under-developed', the 1980s brought a more international focus to development with the Washington Consensus, which brought to the fore development's role in the promotion of capitalism, and eventually the co-opting of countries into a system of globalization (Hart 2001). After a movement towards damning critiques of the development endeavour in the 1990s, which largely found development work to be failing in its stated project goals but succeeding in extending the rule of the state and pandering to geopolitical interests, a 'post-development' movement emerged (McKinnon 2008). Post-development can mean many things in current academic debates, from 'anti-development' as a rejection of the development project entirely; to a more explicit analysis of unequal power dynamics between the givers and receivers of aid in development; to a cause invoking remnants of the hope that development might yet be changed such that it can fulfil its original promise (McKinnon 2008). In its most romanticised version, development has come to be '*a perception which models reality, a myth which comforts societies, and a fantasy which unleashes passions*' (Sachs 1992, pp.1). At its most negative, development has been called an organizing principle to shape world politics and determine power relations between the 'third world' and industrialized nations, with the assumed social goals increasingly questioned as they fail to materialise (Islam 2009). Development practice today is both of these things – a utopian social enterprise and an

extension of a dominant economic and governance system – and international nutrition sits squarely within international development and can thus also be interpreted through the critical lens of the anthropology of development.

Critiques of the early anthropology of development literature recognized that its insights can work against a practical agenda of addressing development issues, with some authors holding development as singularly top-down and extractive, making it difficult to move beyond criticism of the system (Eyben 2000, Gardner and Lewis 2000). Though the seminal early works in the field certainly brought a different lens to looking at development that opened up the field (Ferguson 1994, Escobar 1995), authors writing soon after the flurry of activity in the 1990s, and seeking to move towards an improvement of the international development system, suggested that presenting development as monolithic and destructive was unhelpful, with antagonistic critiques of development fast reaching a point of diminishing returns (Gardner and Lewis 2000, Hart 2001). Rather, it was proposed that anthropologists of development could use the idea of multiple concurrent views on development to problematize and reveal the disparate goals and aims of development actors, and thus contribute to the overturning of dominant paradigms where these are seen to exacerbate rather than ameliorate inequality (Gardner and Lewis 2000). More recent writings on the topic have suggested that the way anthropology has approached the practice of development has changed, and that while anthropology is still concerned with revealing what development conceals through its dominant framings in terms of power structures and goals, the ways it does this have moved from preoccupation with development as a mask for incipient political aims, to more mature understandings of the interactions of various systems of knowledge and actors and the practice of politics in development systems, with an aim to de-mystify rather than destroy development (Mosse 2013). It has been written that development is not a monolithic enterprise; it ends up empowering some and disempowering others, and rather than accepting some ideologies and rejecting others, it may be more useful for anthropology of development research to acknowledge and use all available perspectives in analysis and debate (Islam 2009).

Anthropological approaches see development as a social process constructed by those who participate, and are therefore firmly within interpretivist epistemological traditions. If the social process is constructed, it is through the language and communication of participants and the ways they frame and define the world, thus a key preoccupation of anthropology is with

language and the way it is used. With the work of Foucault (Foucault 1966, Foucault 1975) this focus on social construction through language alighted on the concept of 'discourse' as an abstract construct of meaning in language that allows for the production of knowledge and truth through these constructed framings of the world (Hewitt 2009). Thus in the view of critical anthropology, the production of discourses and normative framings can structure the power to control what is said and how issues are understood, and the study of discourses can therefore reveal power relations in society in order to better understand why history progresses as it does (Considine 2005). The concept of discourse as underlying social action can equally be applied to the field of development and the process of policymaking (Mosse 2011).

The international phase of this study therefore used the concept of discourse in the analysis of international nutrition as a branch of development, and of the historical progression of international nutrition ideas that might have influenced nutrition policy processes in countries such as Zambia. The extent of the role of discourse in a social field can be established through empirical work, asking questions such as: what is the problem being named; what is omitted from the formulation; and for whom is the problem a problem (Considine 2005)? Starting to answer these questions provides a window onto how an issue is framed by different groups, and what this means for how the issue is addressed. Two sources of data were sought for this analysis: Published literature providing histories and commentaries of international nutrition as a field of practice over time; and interviews with longstanding international nutrition professionals.

A review of the historical literature providing summaries and commentaries on periods of nutrition thinking and practice drew together what has been written on different eras to date. A total of 11 relevant papers on aspects of the history of international nutrition as a field of research and practice were found through a search of PubMed (for formal academic articles) and Google Scholar (for grey literature and reports) using the terms 'nutrition', 'history', 'paradigm' and 'era', with papers screened manually for relevance. Relevant papers were read and summarized both visually (as a timeline of different eras of nutrition thinking) and narratively (summarising the key theses of the different commentators on the different eras and the reasons for these emerging and falling).

Also at the international level, key informant interviews were undertaken with ten long-standing international nutrition experts in academia and operational work. Interviewees

were chosen purposively for the duration and centrality of their work to international nutrition over significant periods of time; to reflect a range of different types of development and research agencies; and to reflect a range of approaches to the topic of international nutrition. In addition, two published interviews with key figures in international nutrition were included as transcripts (Levinson 2013, Steffen 2016). Several international actors declined to be interviewed, citing lack of knowledge on the topics at hand, or lack of time. Sampling therefore yielded twelve interviews with international nutrition actors over the course of the study. These international interviews were first open-coded, with transcripts read and codes created based on the topics and issues discussed by respondents. The first several transcripts were re-read several times as new codes emerged and previous transcripts had to be re-analysed in light of the new codes. Gradually, fewer new codes were created as topics re-emerged in multiple interviews, and broader themes could be identified among the codes, which were then re-coded under the emerging themes. The most common themes among the interviews (based on the number of references coded to a theme) included 'ways of talking about nutrition', 'what causes change', and 'evidence and understanding'. These themes in particular formed the empirical backbone of the international study.

The histories and insights gained from the nutrition literature and interviews spoke largely to the ideas of discourse (as different narratives framing the understanding of nutrition), knowledge (particularly the role of scientific evidence in framing nutrition action), and conflict (differing views on what constitutes valid action on nutrition). These ideas, expounded by international interview respondents, were interpreted in this research in the context of a review of key concepts from the anthropology of development literature, applied to international nutrition as a distinct field of development practice. The final analysis of international nutrition as a field of practice weaves the theoretical and empirical literature together into a narrative tracing the history of nutrition as a discipline of study and field of practice, and explaining through the theory of discourse why this history progressed as it did.

2.3.3 National study: policy science

In order to understand present-day nutrition policy and programming in Zambia, both nationally and locally, it was important to understand how international nutrition thinking and national policy environments have co-evolved, and what has driven this historically. The primary focus of the national study was on the ten years to 2016, following changes since Zambia's 2006 national nutrition policy was launched, though a review of national nutrition

policy traces documents back as far as Zambia's independence in 1964, and analysis of the framing of nutrition as an issue in Zambia looks also at the colonial era in the early decades of the 20th century. This part of the study used an in-depth, qualitative case-study methodology based in traditional policy science, following processes at all three levels to track the nutrition policy process over time and assess how certain issues came to the fore and who and what drove this process.

Several policy process researchers have suggested the use of frameworks as guides to identifying elements that should be assessed in these studies, based on what has been seen to be important in previous work on similar issues or areas (Walt, Shiffman et al. 2008). This study at its conception aimed to investigate how and why certain nutrition ideas and approaches influenced nutrition policy in the Zambian context, and therefore based initial investigation on a combination of two agenda-setting frameworks from the global health field which have been applied in much nutrition policy process work to date (Shiffman 2007, Shiffman and Smith 2007) (Table 2.2). The role of the guiding framework was to provide sensitizing lists of elements that should be investigated as an initial direction for the research; as the work progressed, the framework became less central to the research as other theory became relevant and provided explanatory power, but the elements of the framework are still evident within the fabric of the final study.

A framework for studying political priority accorded to different issues in global health (Shiffman and Smith 2007) directs researchers to assess several distinct elements of agenda setting. This internationally-focussed framework comprises four domains recognizable to broader policy process researchers: The nature of an issue, including its tractability and measurability; the power of actors concerned with an issue; the way an issue is framed, both internally within a policy community and externally; and the political context in which an issue plays out. A nationally focussed framework (Shiffman 2007) looks more specifically at the factors influencing agenda setting at a national level, and emphasises the effects of domestic advocacy; transnational influence; and the national political environment. As this study covers both international and national levels, a combination of these two frameworks was used to frame this study, informing interview guides and the wider search for materials and data, for looking at the interface of international and national factors.

Table 2.2 Initial guiding framework for the study

Domain	Definition	Elements
<i>Actor power</i>	Strength of individuals and organizations concerned with the issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy community cohesion • Leadership / entrepreneurship / champions • Guiding institutions • Civil society mobilization
<i>Ideas</i>	Ways in which those involved with the issue understand and portray it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal frame within policy community • External frame and public portrayals • Norm promotion by external actors
<i>Political contexts</i>	Environments in which actors operate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy windows / focusing events • Governance structures • Resource provision (national and international)
<i>Issue characteristics</i>	Features of the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credible indicators and use of data • Severity of problem and competing priorities • Effective interventions / clear policy alternatives

Sources: Combination of framework for generating political priority for maternal mortality in a national context (Shiffman 2007), and framework for agenda setting for infant mortality at global level (Shiffman and Smith 2007).

Interviews

Nationally, the nutrition policy stakeholder group in Zambia is active but not large. Over the six years of the study, a comprehensive list of national actors in the Zambian nutrition policy landscape was compiled for this study from a combination of meeting and workshop minutes, conference and event attendance lists, and professional interactions. Interviews were purposively sought with those key actors from this list who were active in the creation and implementation of nutrition policies and programs, and the shaping of the national nutrition agenda. At local level, the pool of actors is even more defined. Starting with those engaged in a facilitated process of change in nutrition governance and action in 2011, a comprehensive list of government and civil society nutrition actors was drawn up and attempts made to interview every member. There was only one outright refusal of an interview at national level, and one more key actor was unavailable throughout the study. At district level, access was much easier and more informal, with no refusals but several key actors unavailable on study leave for large sections of the project (which itself was instructive). Separately, five international actors were

interviewed specifically with reference to their interactions with the Zambian national level, through their work with donor or NGO organisations present in the country. Most respondents at all levels were willing to be interviewed, some multiple times over several years. The sampling yielded a total of 56 interviews with 48 participants at the district and national levels. Interview guides were based on the guiding framework, but interviews were semi-structured in nature and so also explored issues and ideas as these emerged during conversation.

Initial 'sensitizing themes' for developing codes were derived from concepts in the guiding framework as those deemed important to policy processes in the literature, but codes were also derived from the data itself with reference to these themes and new concepts which arose in the course of fieldwork and analysis. Given the timeline of this research, more than one round of interviews took place to further investigate emerging themes, so that the process of coding transcripts and collecting further interview data became iterative, and specific topics emerging in the analysis were followed up in further interviews. This iterative and inductive process, where codes are generated from the data and refined by further rounds of data collection, is common to a number of qualitative enquiry methods, including grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967) and analytic induction (Znaniecki 1934).

All interviews were coded to initial codes based on the guiding framework, with additional codes added as necessary; previously-coded transcripts were searched for references to new codes as these were added, and word-searches were used to add codes for commonly-mentioned concepts that became important as analysis went on. An interim, broadly descriptive analysis was required from these interview data after one year, to fulfil the requirements of the related Stories of Change in Nutrition project for which the data were also being used. To achieve this, coded interview data were organised and reduced using Framework Analysis, a predominantly deductive approach to policy analysis common in rapid policy research (Pope, Ziebland et al. 2000), particularly noting points of consensus and conflict around different topics, with themes then built up from the data. The resulting report used some of the most common initial codes to summarize 'stories' of the nutrition policy process in Zambia around agenda setting and advocacy; leadership and strategic capacity; commitment and accountability; coordination and coherence; and implementation and access to services (Harris, Drimie et al. 2016). This interim analysis was also provided to national stakeholders in the form of a long report and an oral presentation at a national nutrition research event, and a feedback meeting was convened to explicitly explore and critique the emerging findings under

the Stories of Change study. This feedback meeting provided guidance from the national nutrition policy community on their reading of the research findings, and these responses both tested the relevance of the emerging stories, and provided further guidance for the analysis. In particular, the role of the international community in the national policy process emerged as a point of discussion, and moved the analysis further towards assessment of this aspect of the policy process as the research continued. Of the initial codes that fed into the Stories of Change report, those that related more specifically to international involvement, framings, and agendas were therefore taken forward into the subsequent analysis described below.

Network mapping

At national level, NetMap interviews were used once, in 2015, to elucidate the organizations involved in nutrition as a national issue; accountability links between actors; and influence over the issue of nutrition within and between sectors. The link of ‘accountability’ was chosen as this became a key theme in the data as the research progressed, which required further exploration, and because discussion of accountability might divide those actors centrally involved in the issue from those peripherally involved. In the national level NetMap interview, a group approach was used whereby relevant stakeholders (those with active participation and interest in the nutrition policy process) were invited together to a half-day interview. The aims of the interview – to elucidate who is involved in nutrition policy processes in Zambia, how influential they are over the process, and how they are accountable to each other – were explained to the group, and all actors, links and influence scores were added to the drawn network map by consensus, with the group discussing contentious responses and deciding among themselves on the final response. This group interview was facilitated by a consultant, and had the dual purpose of generating data for the study and allowing a space for those involved in nutrition policy in Zambia to debate and understand the power relations inherent in the process, in order that their own work might take this into consideration.

At local level in the district, the focus was on collaboration links between organizations, as the district had been chosen for this study because it was a pilot district for Zambia’s multi-sectoral nutrition programme. The district NetMap process was undertaken in 2011, before the new programme started, and it was repeated in 2015, to gauge any changes in collaboration over the life of the pilot project. In both 2011 and 2015, an individual interview approach was used in order to combine the NetMap interview with further key informant interviews in the same interview session. Individual NetMaps were drawn by the

same process as in a group interview, with each respondent elaborating the actors, influence and links of which he was aware, then the complete maps were compiled at the stage of entering data into the Excel matrix, with the number of respondents mentioning a link shown by the darkness of the line drawing the link in the final map. NetMap interviews at each level were audio-recorded, and a field assistant was employed to note key comments and concepts that were not captured on the drawn maps, to aid in interpretation as the maps were fed into further analysis described below.

Document review

At national level, reviews of key development plans, national policies, strategies, budgets, and programme documents described changes in the policy and landscape and the institutions and organisations which govern these. The key national nutrition policy and strategy documents which had emerged over the ten years since 2006 in particular were subjected to a form of content analysis to assess whether the focus of the documents in terms of nutrition outcomes had changed over time. This involved using a word count function in the Nvivo software to count how many times certain key nutrition outcomes were mentioned, with the counts then divided by the number of pages to give a fair representation of the focus of the different documents. A similar method was used with donor strategy documents for nutrition in Zambia, to assess the focus of these. At district level, organizational work plans and meeting minutes provided a narrative of changes in approaches and practice. These were not formally assessed or coded, but provided background to the analysis of change in inter-sectoral coordination.

2.4 Analysis and synthesis approaches

The sections above have described in detail the methodological approaches taken in the two separate sub-studies within this research, and how different types of data were collected and refined – in light of the literature in different academic traditions – to create the broad narratives that shaped the empirical findings. Much of the analysis undertaken started deductively, coding transcripts and documents to existing frameworks and coding schemes to break it up into themes more amenable to analysis; and then took a more inductive approach, including the addition of new codes from the data, and the conceptual combining of themes into the final empirical narratives of the study (Miles and Huberman 1994). This study did not end at the description of themes, networks and ideas however; rather, a concurrent reading of the social science literature suggested further theoretical routes along which the empirical

data could be analysed, and through which the national and international sub-studies could be synthesised. As clearer narratives built through this process, more specific literature was indicated to enable digging more deeply into emerging concepts, and in turn suggested further avenues of enquiry within the original data. Eventually the empirical findings and the theoretical concepts together formed a coherent narrative explaining key aspects of the nutrition policy process in Zambia and its links to the international nutrition system.

Use of theory brings out the relevance of research findings which may be applicable to contexts outside of the single case study, and allows interpretation and comparison of research in light of what is already known about an issue (in this case, how policy is negotiated and created). George and Bennett (2005) suggest that in order to incorporate theory into social science research, as initial findings emerge it is useful to ask the question: what is this a case of? The beginnings of this research at local level and the gradual broadening of inquiry to look at national and international levels meant that from early in the research, the concept of links between different levels in the policy process was integral to the study. As the empirical findings built on this original idea, it gradually became clear that this research was a case of 'policy transfer', a theory which describes the different ways that policy learning can occur, and that policy ideas can travel over space or time (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996). The empirical findings in this research and their relation to policy transfer are discussed in chapter 5. While policy transfer provided an important conceptual basis for what was occurring in the Zambian policy process, the theory did not completely explain the incompleteness of the transfer of ideas into Zambia's nutrition policy and action. A further theory, 'advocacy coalitions', seemed to offer an explanation that fit the data, suggesting that the different groups contesting nutrition policy in Zambia impacted the ways that policy ideas were transferred (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993). Further research findings and the application of the theory of advocacy coalitions are discussed in chapter 6. Together, these two theories – woven together with the major empirical narratives – formed the fabric of the national level study.

Underlying both of these approaches to the policy process were questions of the power of both international and national actors involved in nutrition policy and practice in Zambia. Concurrently, the international study had introduced different conceptualizations of power from the critical anthropological tradition (discussed in chapter 3). The two sub-studies (national and international) therefore contributed different analyses of power within the policy process, and these were brought together in a final synthesis of findings from the

national and international levels using a theory of the multiple faces of power (Lukes 1986). This analysis in turn suggested a need for reflection on the legitimacy of international intervention in national policy processes, a question which has also been asked in health policy literature more broadly (Shiffman 2014). Power and legitimacy in the policy process in low-income countries are therefore discussed in chapter 7, with reference to the case of nutrition policy processes in Zambia and the nutrition system internationally. Finally, the utility of a recurring idea in international nutrition strategy and national nutrition policy – that of a rights-based approach to nutrition – is discussed as a potential framing for nutrition policy processes going forward, in light of the findings of this study and the possibilities for action in similar contexts.

3 Narratives of nutrition: evolving international discourse

‘When I use a word,’ Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone,

‘it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less.’

‘The question is,’ said Alice, ‘whether you can make words

mean so many different things.’

‘The question is,’ said Humpty Dumpty, ‘which is to be master – that’s all.’

- Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*, 1871

The nutrition community working on the international nutrition development agenda has been described as an ‘international nutrition system’ (Morris, Cogill et al. 2008), a loose grouping of actors and organizations interlinked financially, intellectually, and personally, working broadly to reduce malnutrition globally. The international nutrition system is made up of agencies and programmes of the UN; donor organizations such as development banks, bilateral aid agencies, and charitable foundations; international non-governmental organisations (NGOs); major universities and research centres; academic journals and the non-specialist media; and multinational commercial food and nutrition companies. With all these different actors involved, there are multiple potential perspectives on what nutrition means in practice which are explored in this chapter.

3.1 Structures and agencies: international nutrition architecture

Before starting to interrogate why and how the current international nutrition agenda has emerged, it is helpful first to understand the different organizations and groups involved in international nutrition. The major guiding framework for nutrition intervention over the past fifteen years has been the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)⁷. Nutrition sat most clearly in MDG 1: *eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*, which as well as targeting general economic development aimed to halve the proportion of hungry people between 1990 and 2015, and measured the prevalence of underweight children and the proportion of the population consuming insufficient energy, neither of which goals was fully achieved globally. Congruent

⁷ Millennium Development Goals project: <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/>

with nutrition's rise up the development priority list however, and consistent with tighter definitions of what constitutes nutrition as distinct from food security or hunger, nutrition gets higher billing in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which aim to guide development action over the coming fifteen years. SDG 2 aims to *end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture*, rolling nutrition into broader food (but not health) concerns, and measuring hunger, stunting and wasting levels for a clearer picture of the nutrition situation. Nutrition also plays a part as an enabling factor in several other goals in both the MDGs and SDGs including health, education, and economic development.

Beyond these broad global goals, nutrition features in a growing number of regional agreements, notable among them the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the continent's over-arching policy since 2003 on economic growth and food security through the agriculture sector, which has a specific focus on reducing hunger and malnutrition, reaffirmed in 2014 with the Malabo Declaration which committed participating African countries to bringing down stunting to 10% and underweight to 5% by 2025; and the African Regional Nutritional Strategy (ARNS) which provides a framework within which to advocate to Africa's leaders on the importance of nutrition for national development.

The United Nations (UN) is broadly tasked with coordinating action on issues of global concern, and nutrition is one such issue with a long history of UN action (Mokoro 2015). Even before it was officially constituted, a fledgling UN held its first conference on food and agriculture at Hot Springs, Virginia, in 1943, paving the way for the creation of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and for cooperation among member states on issues of food. The first World Food Conference was held in 1974 at FAO in Rome, constituting the later-disbanded World Food Council, and the Committee on World Food Security as an inter-governmental forum on food policy in the wake of severe shortages in developing countries. Three years later, in 1977, the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) was established as the focal point for nutrition policy through the UN system, but without an explicit country coordination mandate. A series of high-level international meetings on nutrition occurred over several decades, including the 1992 International Conference on Nutrition (ICN-1); the 1996 and 2002 World Food Summits; and the institution of the Global Nutrition Cluster to coordinate humanitarian nutrition action in 2006. The SCN was stripped of its coordination mandate in the early years of the new century, largely due to its reticence to embrace industry

as a partner in efforts to reduce malnutrition, so the international nutrition world still did not have coherent leadership on nutrition under the UN, particularly at country level, with four separate UN agencies (FAO, WHO, UNICEF and WFP) tasked with different aspects of nutrition in practice⁸.

In 2008, as the international development world more broadly was waking up to nutrition, these agencies established the Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition (REACH) mechanism to facilitate joint UN support in countries, and in early 2010 a framework was agreed by broader development partners for the creation of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, aiming to coordinate international nutrition action, by the UN and other development agencies, under country-led agreements. Later in 2010 the UN and the US and Irish governments launched the initiative *1,000 Days – Feed a Child, Feed the Future* with a call to focus on the first 1000 days of life for intervention, and stunting as a primary outcome; launching the initiative, Hillary Clinton noted that *“there is a unique convergence of the science and research about what works and what needs to be invested in. It is now time for us to get into action”* (Thurow 2016). By the end of 2010, the SUN framework had been turned into a Road Map, the road map had been linked to resources under the 1000 Days Partnership of donors, and the SUN Movement had its first four country members: Ethiopia, Guatemala, Peru, and Zambia. Although there was some confusion internally within the UN about the respective roles of the SCN and SUN within that first year, and confusion about SUN’s constitution and funding mechanisms throughout 2011, by early 2012 SUN was firmly established under the UN system, with a coordinator reporting to the UN Secretary General and a multi-stakeholder Lead Group sitting in UNDP providing oversight. Formed partly in response to calls for more coherence in the international nutrition community, and partly in reaction to previous bodies’ resistance to the business principles SUN brings, SUN aims to bring development actors (‘governments, civil society, the United Nations, donors, businesses and scientists’) together, as a movement for strengthening political commitments to nutrition and accountability for those commitments (SUN 2012). SUN has four strategic processes through which it works, aiming to foster country action on nutrition through sustained political commitment and establishment of functioning multi-stakeholder platforms; endorsement of national nutrition policies that incorporate best practices; alignment of actions across sectors

⁸ SCN crisis, see: http://www.wphna.org/htdocs/2011_jan_hp4_scn_crisis.htm

and among stakeholders; and increasing resources for nutrition and demonstration of results (SUN 2012). It has been claimed that the movement in its initial years of existence has had significant impact on nutrition agendas both globally and in the 57 or so countries which have now signed up (Nisbett, Gillespie et al. 2014).

In addition to these various UN bodies, a 2015 mapping of international entities with a primary focus on nutrition identified over 25 different coordinating, research, technical assistance, convening, civil society and private sector bodies specifically engaged in international nutrition for development, not including financial donors funding aspects of nutrition or NGOs with nutrition programs among a broader portfolio (Mokoro 2015). Among this spectrum of nutrition entities are various fora for gathering parties interested in specific sub-topics (such as the Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN, 1995), Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN Forum, 2007), Right to Food Watch Consortium (2008), 1000 days partnership (2010), and the Global Network for the Right to Food and Nutrition (2013)); research groups (such as the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI, 1975), and the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition (2013)); and technical assistance organizations (such as Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA, 1998), and Strengthening Partnerships, Results & Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING, 2011)). Half of the bodies identified have been established since 2008. Large international NGOs with established nutrition mandates advocate for and implement much of the practical international work in countries, key among them Action Against Hunger; Save the Children; International Rescue Committee; and Goal. At regional level there are also several groups working on international nutrition; key among these in Africa are the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), each of which has a dedicated nutrition department working on development nutrition issues.

Underpinning much of this action are financial donors in the form of national governments, international lending organizations, and private foundations. International aid donors (including national governments) pledged record funding to nutrition at the 2013 Nutrition for Growth event hosted by the UK government; USD 19.8 million was promised at the event by twelve donor agencies, nine of which are currently on track to spend what they budgeted (IFPRI 2016). The largest international donors to nutrition by dollar amounts in 2014 were the USA, Canada, the EU, the UK, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) (IFPRI 2016), though a study ranking political commitment to nutrition funding ranked the UK,

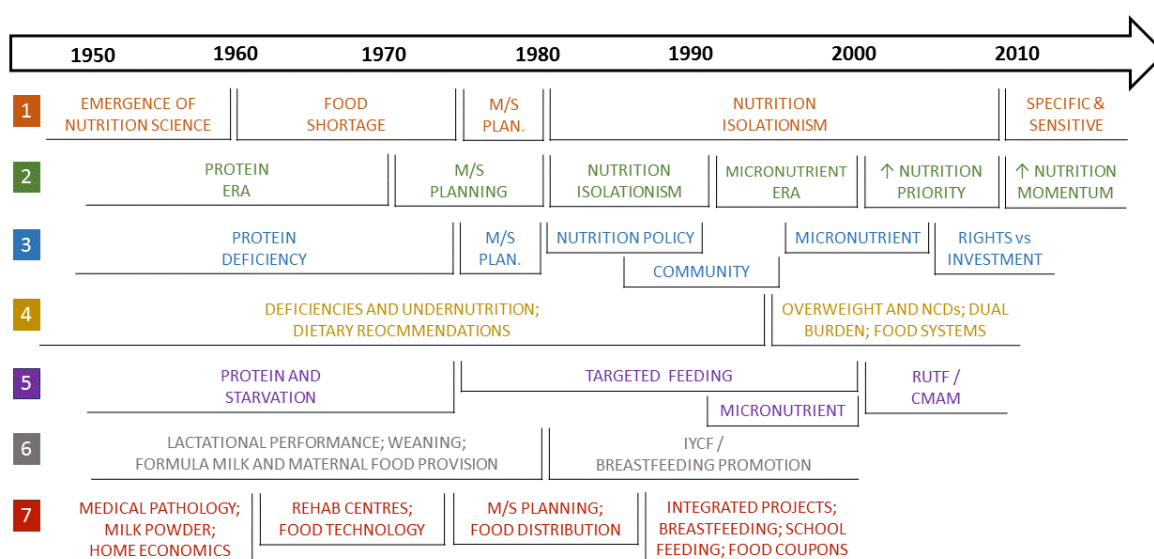
Canada, Australia, Denmark, and Germany most highly, despite these dollar amounts (te Lintelo, Haddad et al. 2013).

A final group identified as a key part of the international nutrition architecture is private sector organizations, or groups working with these. The international nutrition system has a long and difficult history with the private sector, due in large part to issues with the infant formula industry and its links to infant deaths through unscrupulous marketing in the 1970s and 80s (Nisbett, Gillespie et al. 2014, Gillespie and Harris 2016). The International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) has been active since 1979 as a vocal opponent to the infant formula industry's involvement in developing countries, and a proponent of the Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes ('the Code'), which is taken into national policy and legislation in numerous countries but openly flouted by industry in many. Partly in response to this impasse, and positioning itself between the worlds of the private sector and civil society, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) was formed in 2002, aiming to explore the potential of market-oriented strategies to reduce malnutrition while keeping an eye on potential negative consequences of private sector engagement. Recent attention to nutrition through the agriculture sector has brought to light a new front of contention in the form of public-private partnerships for food in development contexts. Key among these is the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, formed in 2012 and committed to policy and institutional reform to address food security through markets and private sector action, catalysed by donor funds. A recent review of the private sector in nutrition finds that while there is significant scope for business to drive innovation and funding for nutrition, past actions (in particular the baby milk scandal, but also the promotion of value-added processed foods in general) have led to mistrust within the international nutrition world, and current lack of transparency of business aims related to child undernutrition is likely to limit collaboration (Hoddinott, Gillespie et al. 2015). Meanwhile, other writers have expressed caution about unrealistic expectations of the private sector to deliver public health goods (Maestre, Poole et al. 2017). There are therefore many and diverse groups working in the international nutrition system. Most are aligned with the field of international development, including financial donors, UN agencies, large international NGOs and the national NGOs they support, and research institutes. Others are purely in the business realm, largely in the food sector but also in healthcare. And most are present both internationally and reaching down into country contexts, interacting with governments and citizens for diverse action on nutrition.

3.2 Nutrition history (as written by the victors)

Sometimes it can be helpful to look back, in order to move forward in more useful directions. Most scientific disciplines, when looking back over their history, can identify distinct eras of thinking which dominated for a time then changed as understanding grew, contexts changed, and theories were refined or abandoned. These eras in their grandest sense have been termed ‘paradigms’ by Thomas Kuhn (1964), but in less sweeping ways can be a set of ideas that define the dominant assumptions and norms of a discipline at a certain time, including what may legitimately be observed, what kinds of questions can be asked, how questions are structured, and how results should be interpreted. As Hassel (2014, pp. 3) describes in relation to scientific communities, *‘Thomas Kuhn coined the term “paradigm” in referring to the shared models of how the world works as well as the shared understanding of rules and standards of scientific practice that prepares the student for membership in a particular scientific community. Kuhn described the mental models supporting a paradigm as important because they exert a deep hold on the scientific mind; a powerful influence to think of and perceive issues in one way rather than another. These shared understandings of a scientific community allow certain categories and relationships to emerge as especially salient, while others become less noticeable or invisible’*. Understanding the historic norms, paradigms and shifts of emphasis that have shaped ideas and practice in the international nutrition system can shed light on current working practices. This research initially contributes a novel analysis of the history of the nutrition discipline internationally, both in terms of what knowledge and action was produced, and how and why these were created, through the lens of critical anthropological approaches. This chapter of the study reviewed, synthesised and analysed papers written by several commentators from inside the nutrition community who have looked back on these issue-framing paradigms through history (Figure 3.1), and this review was combined with insights from interviews with several long-standing actors in international nutrition, asked for their views on key periods in nutrition history. The narratives obtained from the literature and interviews, rather than being taken on their own terms, are here subjected to critical appraisal through their deconstruction in the anthropological tradition.

Figure 3.1: Review of papers describing paradigms in nutrition, 1950-present



1: Herforth 2014: World Bank focus. 2: Nisbett et al 2014/Gillespie et al 2003: Nutrition policy. 3: Jonsson 2010: International nutrition. 4: Kennedy et al 2011/Kennedy 2008: Research priorities and global policy. 5: Webb 2009/Golden 2002: Emergency nutrition. 6: Crowther et al 2009/Knaak 2006: Infant feeding. 7: Levinson and McLachlan 1999: Nutrition interventions

Source: The author, based on reviewed literature

Acronyms: M/S: Multisectoral; RUTF: Ready-to-use Therapeutic Foods; CMAM: Community-based Management of Malnutrition; IYCF: Infant and Young Child Feeding

Modern international nutrition as a discipline is a coming together of strands of health sciences with international development, and is concerned predominantly with the reduction of malnutrition – mostly undernutrition in children and their mothers in low- and middle-income countries – either through its treatment or prevention. In the written accounts reviewed, multiple narratives can be seen to have shaped international nutrition thinking over time; these relate to the nature of the problem of malnutrition – its manifestations, causes and consequences – as well as to the value of different approaches to addressing it. Though there are differences in interpretation of the past, certain eras are evident across many of the histories: Nutrition between the two World Wars was a preoccupation in Britain in particular, with the work of John Boyd-Orr and others shedding light on the poverty dimensions of malnutrition in Europe (Boyd-Orr 1936), and later World War II necessitating rationing and a focus on acquiring sufficient nutrients, so Britain drove much nutrition research at this time.

Post-war to the 1970s, a focus internationally on starvation, food quantity, and protein sufficiency in colonial and post-colonial countries is evident in several reviews of international nutrition; notable is a framing of malnutrition as hunger, along with deficiency in calories or proteins. An emphasis on micronutrients and infant feeding, aspects of nutrition focused on delivery of information or products, held sway for two decades in the 1980s and 1990s, subsequently termed the 'disciplinary isolation' of nutrition. And one of the most commonly identified themes in these historical accounts, that of a need for multiple sectors to become involved in reducing malnutrition, is evident at two different time points in the histories, described as 'multi-sectoral planning' in the 1970s, and revived as 'nutrition-sensitive programming' in multiple sectors in the 2000s (see references in Figure 3.1; also Gillespie and Harris (2016)). Thus the proper role and focus of international nutrition policy and practice, while interpreted differently by different observers, can be seen to have followed several broad paradigms (and shifts of emphasis within paradigms) over time, as the key problems and solutions came to be framed in different ways.

The way an issue is framed by different parties at different times is a powerful piece of the policy process; in a practical field such as nutrition or public health, it will determine who gets involved in issues, and how solutions are decided (Shiffman 2007). Indeed, the written accounts shown above are only those that people chose to write, and that then made it past peer reviewers and into publication; it is notable that all of the available publications on the history of nutrition are written by practicing nutrition academics. Issue framing is sometimes understood as a narrative to be propagated, explaining or describing an issue in ways that bring parties on board with an agenda. But there is also a deeper level to issue framing and dominant paradigms that can be understood as discourses in the Foucauldian sense, in that studying these can reveal power relationships in society as expressed through language and practices (Foucault 1966, Grillo and Stirrat 1997). It is these aspects of issue framing that are addressed below.

3.3 Constant conflict: the role of philosophy

Despite the patterns that emerge from this review and analysis of work on historic nutrition paradigms, it is clear from the cross-section of academic views that there is no single nutrition paradigm at any one time: the protein discourse co-existed with debates around lactational performance; targeted feeding persisted during an era of multi-sectoral planning; and integrated community programming was being attempted even while much of the

community was focused on delivering single micronutrients. It is also clear that in the competition for dominant framing, periods between shifts in emphasis become shorter and more fragmented and overlapping as we move from the 1950s towards the present day, as more actors and ideas become involved in the issue. In the nutrition histories analysed here, there have always been multiple agendas – sometimes competing, sometimes mutually reinforcing – leading to different discourses around the issues to be addressed. Central to discourse then is negotiation and conflict, including between those in the same field (Hajer 1995); a dominant or mainstream paradigm usually co-exists with one or more ‘counterpoint paradigms’, which may replace each other in a paradigm shift, either through external rupture (external forces cause a crisis in the discourse) or cumulative conflict (internal conflicts in the necessarily simplified discourse are no longer tenable) (Considine 2005, Jonsson 2010).

Key points of change between nutrition paradigms – often emerging from conflict – become evident from the papers and interviews. A clear break with a protein-centric view in the 1970s came as the result of an overwhelming body of evidence against the ‘protein hypothesis’, gathered by scientists working outside of the dominant paradigm who had long been sceptical of protein’s central role in malnutrition (Jonsson 2010). A counterpoint paradigm then took over, born of a view that malnutrition was multi-causal and attention was therefore needed to many determinants of nutrition – and therefore coordinated work from many sectors – all at once. This multi-sectoral view of nutrition arrived on the back of a broader ‘age of planning’ in international development in the 1960s and 70s (Escobar 1997), and in an era when ‘integrated rural development’ was becoming a major focus for development projects more generally (Ruttan 1984). Within this paradigm, the World Bank added both a ‘rural development’ focus to its agriculture department and a nutrition department to its population unit in 1973, explicitly bringing attention to the links between agricultural development and nutrition in its programmes (Herforth and Hoberg 2014). Multi-sectoral planning units were set up and supported in 26 countries, with a focus on planning the policies of multiple sectors to respond to nutrition (Herforth and Hoberg 2014). This nutrition-centric multi-sectoral planning, assuming that nutrition should be a primary goal of many key sectors, did not however bring all the necessary sectors on board according to one international respondent in this research: *"Many population control advocates were resentful of suggestions that health extension staff spend time on nutrition ... Some agriculture planners complained that [nutritionists] were getting in the way... And educators insisted that they were too busy teaching to spend time on school health and nutrition"*. So the technocratic planning

models largely failed as envisioned in most countries due to over-complexity of the process and lack of ownership by any particular ministry or bureaucracy (Herforth and Hoberg 2014). Lessons were learned however on the need for proper engagement with sectors outside of health (Berg 1987, Field 1987, Herforth and Hoberg 2014), and elements of a multi-sectoral approach have remained to this day, most notably in the UNICEF framework (1990) describing the determinants of malnutrition, with multi-sectoral action today enjoying a resurgence as ‘nutrition-sensitive’ action in different sectors. Due to the complexity of these actions in practice however, some have questioned “*whether or how [multi-sectoral nutrition] can become effective or sustainable within a time frame that is acceptable to politicians and international donors*” at all (Pelletier, Gervais et al. 2016, pp. 669).

Many nutritionists during the 1970s multi-sectoral planning era were disillusioned that the issue they held important was not prioritised by other sectors, and subsequently retreated into a long period of ‘nutrition isolationism’, described by one respondent as a petulant group reaction: “*Well the heck with you, if you don't want to participate with us, we'll do things that we [don't] need you... We'll do things we can do alone*”. Thus a focus on micronutrient delivery and infant feeding came to the fore in the 1980s, as single-sector solutions that nutritionists were able to address unaided. It has been argued that this preference for a ‘micronutrient turn’ among nutrition practitioners then became the dominant paradigm precisely because it coincided with the rise of a global neoliberal age, with micronutrient ‘products’ providing an easy marketing opportunity for food companies, and a set of micronutrient delivery programs evolving that meshed well with emerging forms of managerial governance (Kimura 2013). Even during this time however, some continued to work on integrated programmes, including one of the most infamous multi-sectoral, community-led nutrition projects of recent decades⁹.

Playing into this nutrition isolationism was the prevalence – for several decades – of dominant narratives of what nutrition meant, outside of the nutrition sector. The focus of a particular section of development researchers and practitioners on the lack of quantity of food produced by smaller, poorer farmers, led for several decades from the 1950s to the primacy of development approaches aiming to increase the calories available to rural households (Herforth and Hoberg 2014). With malnutrition thus framed largely as hunger, and hunger

⁹ The Iringa programme in Tanzania, launched in 1985, was a leading example of an inter-sectoral, community driven programme that was to have a major impact in nutrition thinking and action in years to come. In particular, it stimulated the development of the pioneering UNICEF conceptual framework and nutrition strategy in 1990 (Gillespie and Harris 2016).

framed as a productivity issue, to most working in development outside of the nutrition sector this was a food security issue to be addressed by improvements in agriculture. The Green Revolution was predicated on this view, and brought significant increases in yields, particularly in Asia and Latin America, based on improved seed breeding and modern agricultural techniques (Hazell 2009). Hunger, and in particular famine, in many regions was significantly reduced, and for many the issue of nutrition was seen as solved by the 1970s (Herforth and Hoberg 2014). This allowed development projects beyond the nutrition sector to largely ignore nutrition (and in fact also food security and agriculture, which were also seen as resolved and fell off development agendas between the 1980s and the turn of the century), with nutrition projects retreating deep into the health sector. There is still a substantial community internationally promoting a paradigm of food security through increased staple food production (seen as raising both calorie availability and incomes) as the solution to nutrition issues, with whom others in the nutrition community – promoting the food-health-care model of malnutrition – are in constant low-level conflict.

The interplay of these ongoing conflicts between paradigms has fundamentally shaped the opportunities, constraints and effectiveness of international nutrition intervention over time. In her history of nutrition science, Quinn (1994) demonstrates a back-and-forth conflict over a period of decades and even centuries between what we could call philosophies of nutrition: those who took a social view of hunger and poverty (for example a focus on the cost of an adequate diet in the 18th and 19th century; John Boyd-Orr's work on malnutrition and income, and hunger in the face of agricultural surplus in the 1930s; the 1943 United Nations Hot Springs Conference and the 'freedom from hunger' declaration; and the 1974 World Food Conference focus on social and economic aspects of nutrition), and those who took a technical view of nutrition (for instance a focus on the importance of nutrition education backed by advances in nutrient discovery in the early 20th century; food technology in producing protein-rich foods in the 1960s or micronutrient supplements in the 1980s; and UNICEF's GOBI strategy in the 1980s¹⁰). Broadly, this has been recognized by a respondent working in the international nutrition field as a split in underlying philosophies between *“technocrats, with medical solutions to existing problems, [and] structuralists, who want to address why the issue was there in the first place”*.

¹⁰ GOBI: growth monitoring, oral rehydration, breast-feeding, immunization

Stemming from this philosophical divergence, another key difference in the community in recent decades has been between ‘emergency’ nutritionists, predominantly focusing on the treatment of malnutrition where it has occurred in acute or recurring crises through various medical models; and ‘development’ nutritionists, focusing on prevention of malnutrition through attention to its social and physical determinants (Menon and Stoltzfus 2012), mimicking the ‘relief’ and ‘development’ tracks in humanitarian action more broadly (Barnett 2011). In the interviews undertaken for this study, the conflicts between these tribes were marked. Take the responses from two different nutrition academics on the issue of Ready-To-Use Therapeutic Foods (RUTF): *“I think all this use of Plumpy’nut [RUTF] is highly irresponsible. UNICEF’s distributing useless products, like Vitamin A capsules and Plumpy’nut, is appalling”* vs. *“But really - is it a caring, humanitarian, reasonable response to say ‘[RUTF is] just too expensive for this generation, let them die?’ ... If there were something that really worked for prevention like Ready-To-Use Therapeutic Food does for treatment, then we should move in that direction, shouldn’t we? What would we actually spend money [for prevention] on?”*

Thus the international nutrition community is not monolithic but rather has been split down various philosophical lines: prevention vs cure, technical vs social, inclusive vs isolationist. Where nutrition practitioners fall on this spectrum varies by individual, and many of course see the benefits of multiple approaches. But given certain preferences and understandings of the issue, practitioners and researchers tend to fall into different epistemic communities, understood as *‘networks of professionals (possibly from different disciplines and backgrounds) with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain’* (Haas 1992, pp.3). These epistemic communities apply their specialized knowledge and interpretations in providing information to decision-makers, offering an important input into policy decisions. The fact that the international nutrition community has been characterized as fragmented (Morris, Cogill et al. 2008) therefore has negative implications for progressing a coherent agenda, in presenting political opportunities for policymakers in cherry-picking options by aligning with different interpretations of knowledge provided by different epistemic communities with differing philosophies, according to their political interests or beliefs.

3.4 Strategic ambiguity: the role of language

Every community has its shorthand, words or phrases used to communicate particular concepts important to disciplinary practices. In development practice, these words are rife; using the right development ‘buzzwords’ can signal understanding and belonging¹¹, and in a practical sense can be the difference between attracting funding and losing out on a project proposal. These words however are often imbued with meaning which may be far removed from their original sense, and in some cases meanings attributed to them may be so broad as to allow for multiple interpretations. Buzzwords therefore can also serve to obfuscate, to obscure or broaden definitions so much that all viewpoints can be included, and therefore all or no specific agendas be advanced; that *‘combine general agreement on the abstract notion that they represent with endless disagreement about what they might mean in practice’* (Cornwall and Eade 2010, pp.2). Where several possibly competing agendas exist in a field, discursive strategies such as the use of buzzwords can create a strategic ambiguity through which indistinct understandings of an issue and its solutions are maintained between different sets of actors (Hajer 1995, Richey 1999). In this way, multiple actors can be seen to be following their own divergent interests in projects undertaken, but in pursuit of the same stated goal, permitting friendly negotiation but enabling tactical elisions or multiple interpretations of concepts, and foreclosing leverage by one group or another as all sides can claim to be motivated by the same purpose (Fraser 2007, Mosse 2013). As McGee and Edwards (2016, pp.2) note in applying the concept of strategic ambiguity to governance research: *‘conceptual ambiguity generates a false sense that we are all pulling together in one common, unproblematic endeavour’*.

This tactic therefore has positive and negative connotations, and is used, whether consciously or not, by different agencies signing up to reduce malnutrition. Throughout the review and interviews, it becomes clear that the concept of stunting – significantly short stature for a child’s age – has overtaken underweight, wasting, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and hunger as the dominant concept in international nutrition, with many respondents using the terms malnutrition and stunting interchangeably in informal

¹¹ These buzzwords – their ubiquity and in some sense meaninglessness – are cynically acknowledged by development practitioners in the field through the game of ‘development bingo’ (or less charitably, ‘bullshit bingo’), played in official meetings and conferences, in which the buzzwords of the day are listened for, and *bingo* silently mouthed between complicit parties when strings of buzzwords are heard.

conversation. In part, this focus is a rational function of the prevalence of stunting in the world compared to other major nutrition issues: stunting rates are higher than wasting and overweight rates in most low-income countries. But they are not always higher than some micronutrient deficiencies; stunting rates are declining in many countries whereas overweight and its attendant diseases are increasing; and stunting is not as immediately life-threatening as wasting. So why is stunting winning the buzzword war?

Stunting is a useful measure in that it speaks to overall human development; everything needs to have gone relatively well in a young child's life for her to have avoided stunting, and as one international respondent put it *"the only way to measure success in terms of what your policy has done for the actual status of the people, the individuals, is to measure in terms of nutrition... that finally stunting is the only objective, pure measure of change that you can attribute as success, and the rest is in a way accessory"*. So measuring stunting as an outcome makes sense instrumentally – though it is a broad rather than specific indicator of change in wellbeing. But stunting is also a useful concept in another way: it is all-encompassing – as both an outcome of all of the food, health and care determinants of undernutrition, and a precursor or modifier to many key development challenges, from economic growth to education – and so speaks to the goals and interests of many development actors: *'a great advantage of stunting or nutrition in general is its tremendous malleability or versatility with which it can be framed or constructed. All social and policy issues are socially constructed by design or default ... but the multidimensional causality and consequences of stunting offers an unusual opportunity to align it with many other issues rather than compete with them in a zero-sum fashion'* (Pelletier, Haider et al. 2013, pp.94).

This malleability is indeed an advantage politically, but while the feeling of common endeavour is often genuine, and the strategic ambiguity permits multiple actors to be brought on board with an issue, this sense of common purpose can mask conflicting interests and contradictory actions in practice. As noted by an international interview respondent: *"I think there's something that needs to be clarified - what problem are we trying to solve here? And that has been fuzzy forever, it's somewhat deliberate, and it's caused a lot of confusion. We do tend to call child growth nutritional status, which has been a bit of fuzziness, which has been politically used to make sure nutrition doesn't fall off the agenda, basically"*. Commitments to broad concepts – even nominally positive goals such as stunting reduction – can mask varied interests and agendas that may become adversarial in the course of action or implementation over time (Stefani and Humphries 2013). The most obvious manifestation of this in

international nutrition is the infant formula industry's use of rhetoric on the importance of breastmilk to undermine the practice of breastfeeding itself, marketing breast milk substitutes through positive comparisons to the properties of maternal milk (Koerber 2013). Perhaps less cynically, but equally tactically, stunting can be used to frame a majority of development action that would anyway be undertaken by different agencies in their business-as-usual; the discourse may have changed, but the agendas have not, and the actions promoted by different groups in the name of stunting can be contradictory. If both breastfeeding advocates and infant formula companies (or permaculture practitioners and fertiliser manufacturers) can claim to be working towards its reduction by promoting opposing actions, the concept becomes less useful in framing the issue in practice.

For all of these reasons, focus on stunting has, to a large extent, crowded out action on other nutrition issues such as obesity and wasting, just as a focus on the 1000 day window has crowded out action for other age groups. Work on other nutrition issues is undertaken, but it is stunting which dominates nutrition targets and funding in the big global and regional initiatives and national nutrition projects. The very fact that stunting is an outcome of and input into such a complex web of issues (while also being relatively simple to define and measure in itself) is what makes it so appealing in a global policy world where multiple ideas and interests must be accommodated, so this particular concept has been promoted by global actors trying to bring multiple agencies on board to act on nutrition. This plays out similarly in national contexts where numerous donors, NGOs and ministries can see their roles in defining solutions without much change in their original mandates. But stunting is not agreed by all nutrition actors as the outcome of choice; as one international respondent put it: *"I think the current obsession with stunting is appalling. We're talking about child growth and development, of which stunting is a biomarker amongst many, and to define the situation as reducing stunting seems to be like defining reducing children's illness by reducing fever"*. Thus stunting has become a buzzword in international nutrition, used to bring multiple actors and multiple sectors on board. But it is precisely this 'all things to all people' property of the concept that both enables action on a common cause, and limits progress on that cause when participants are pulling in different directions.

3.5 Rendering technical: the role of knowledge

Related to the framing of issues is the way that knowledge is seen in the fields of development and nutrition. As an ultimately Western concept, development is bound up with

Western scientific knowledge and how knowledge is presented; the work of academics and the accumulated canon of knowledge on different facets of development, as well as development itself, is therefore generally couched in terms of the developers' knowledge categories, often around economics, technology and management (Hobart 1993, Escobar 1997, Edkins 2000). Similarly, nutrition as a discipline stems from Western health and medicine, which in turn rest on classical theories from behavioural psychology, biomedical science, and public administration (Potvin, Gendron et al. 2005), and it has been recognized that the generally technical training in biology and perhaps public health for most practitioners in this field means nutrition research and practice often struggle to bring in broader social science and political theory (Berg 1993, Garrett and Natalicchio 2011). The biomedical and international development disciplinary streams combine to become 'international nutrition'. Over time, international nutrition has become a more and more coherent field of study within nutrition, as the 2008 and 2013 Lancet series of papers make clear – but this coherence has come at the cost of excluding to some extent research and practice that does not fit with dominant paradigms.

A field, such as the arts, law and medicine, is a social arena structured by specific rules and a common focus, and populated by actors who share similar dispositions but hold unequal positions (Bourdieu 1984, Gaventa 2003, Hilgers and Mangez 2014). The creation of boundaries around a field defines what knowledge is inside the scientific domain and what is outside; within the discipline of nutrition sciences, the professional culture is bounded by beliefs shared by leading nutrition scientists about appropriate topics and methods of a nutrition research programme (Stefani and Humphries 2013). As these authors note: *'The concept of boundary making... adds to a more nuanced understanding of intervention by showing how the formation of groups, in this case nutrition science itself, builds in assumptions about what are legitimate domains of study and how these domains are being consciously reconfigured to open a path forward'*. In other words, practitioners will often recognise and reproduce the common opinions of a field as self-evident, crowding out even the acknowledgment of other possible ways of working (Bourdieu 1984, Hilgers and Mangez 2014).

While the sociology of science has long seen science as constructed knowledge resulting from competition and negotiation between different groups of scientists (Keeley and Scoones 1999), explicit acknowledgement of this bounded thinking is rare within most

scientific fields. While the knowledge produced by many academic institutes may be sound science, it is only ever a piece of a larger puzzle, open to ‘hidden subjectivities’ in the form of background assumptions embedded within disciplines that become so ubiquitous as to be invisible, presenting the epistemological problem of under-determination, or *‘gaps between hypotheses and data when background hypotheses are not articulated but presupposed as universal givens’* (Hassel 2014). It has been said of the nutrition research world, for instance, that *‘the boundary between scientific and situated knowledge closely corresponds to the two branches within the field of nutrition: one focused on research, teaching, and training and the other focused on operations, programming, and planning ... The former branch has historically been considered science, whereas the latter has not,’* historically limiting the scope of what may be researched (Stefani and Humphries 2013). These inherent biases, in this case inherited from the medical world, worked well in nutrition science when the focus was on a medical model of delivering single nutrients, but struggle with the more complex and political issues of multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary responses to hunger and malnutrition currently called for (Hassel 2014), though this divergence is starting to be addressed with recent initiatives such as the Society for Implementation Science in Nutrition¹².

Related to what is considered valid knowledge, there are also different schools of thought on development practice; ultimately the types of knowledge that are accepted in a field validate certain kinds of action, a phenomenon that has been termed ‘rendering technical’ (Li 2007). In this way, complex social problems are characterized by expert practitioners as intelligible issues appropriate for certain technical solutions, often either not recognizing or dismissing as overly complex the historical and structural conditions that created the issues in the first place. This is seen in ‘parachute’ aid work, when international agencies without a long history in a country arrive to resolve symptoms such as malnutrition without attention to the social or political context that caused the issue in the first place. Removing the political context of an issue and representing it in neutral scientific language thus filters out – either consciously or unconsciously – the possibility of non-technical social or political actions in its resolution (Li 2007). This has been documented in nutrition, through what Kimura (2013) calls ‘charismatic nutrients in nutritionism’, in the translation of *‘issues of poverty, landlessness and hunger into problems of public health to be solved by technical*

¹² See the Society for Implementation Science in Nutrition (SISN): <http://www.implementnutrition.org/>

interventions in social relations and hygiene' (Li 2007, pp.10). As Edkins (2000, pp.1) puts it: *'The incorporation of hunger into...the modern human sciences has...removed [it] from the realm of the ethical and political and brought [it] under the sway of experts and technologists of nutrition, food distribution, and development. Its position there, as an appropriate subject for expert knowledge, remains a political position, but one that can lay claim to a political neutrality because of the specific way that science is construed as 'truth'.*' Or Jarosz (2011, pp.130): *'The problem of hunger [as] individualized and rendered an economic and technical problem... shifts responsibilities for addressing hunger increasingly to rural women, but rarely addresses core gender relations history and the food system'.*

This is not to say that nutrition practitioners are particularly cynical in their choice of research topics or programme focus: as in any field, action is restricted by dominant issues and available resources, and while agendas are contributed to by experts in the field, salient problems are defined by other actors and interests also. In order to be able to continue to research and act, the nutrition community has been consciously framing nutrition in terms of the dominant development discourses of the day in order to get an important issue onto the agenda and into funding cycles. But this framing in turn limits the ways that nutrition can be talked about in policy and practice circles, and therefore limits the things that are able to be done in response. Rendering an issue technical eventually leads to designated experts being the only people accredited to talk about it with authority, even while those experiencing hunger and malnutrition may prefer different responses (Kimura 2013). Those promoting the prevailing paradigms in nutrition over time (with the possible exceptions of the community-led paradigm most popular in nutrition in the 1980s, and the ongoing breastfeeding / infant formula clashes) have generally chosen to avoid head-on conflicts with established power – whether government, private sector, or other elites – in favour of technical fixes. These rarely tackle comprehensively the root causes of inequality and lack of political and social empowerment, rather they focus on distinct elements of nutrition that can be provided rather than negotiated. The core guiding structure in nutrition, the UNICEF framework (1990), explicitly separates the determinants of undernutrition into immediate and underlying issues, to be tackled through a range of technical programmes; and basic and structural causes, with interventions encompassing advocacy strategies, accountability initiatives, leadership programmes and capacity investments (Bhutta, Das et al. 2013) which, while moving towards the political, are currently framed more as managerial than radical. Scientists as an interest group often take a technical stance and focus on appealing to others to change their interests

accordingly, rather than reorganizing power relations (Hopkins 1993). International nutrition, made up as it is of predominantly scientifically educated individuals, is therefore not a particularly politically active field; while nutrition is largely affected by two sectors – health and agriculture- which tend to be very prominent politically, nutrition is in itself not threatening to global or national political aspirations precisely because it is a small technical field with generally politically weak actors (Pinstrup-Andersen 1993, Nisbett, Gillespie et al. 2014).

The creation of evidence and information is a necessary part of understanding what can be done to solve a problem (however defined), but the process of choosing what to research and how to research it – and even what is researchable – is therefore not as rational as we would like to think (Jonsson 2010); the forms of knowledge and ‘ways of knowing’ accepted in development and nutrition practice are not neutral, but have implications for action. Evidence is created within the confines of discourse, and ‘truth’ conforms to the rules and norms of the discourse, in science as in other areas (Hewitt 2009); this goes as far as the fundamental positivist/constructivist divide, with most work seen as admissible evidence in international nutrition being the former. Topics to be researched in the first place are not chosen apolitically, with the priorities of funding bodies or business interacting with the views of experts (and, occasionally, sufferers or service users) over which issues are studied (Morris, Cogill et al. 2008, Sridhar 2012). Some nutrition academics have long noted a technical and economics bias in nutrition policy research, for instance (mirroring a neoliberal bias in much development research in general), at the expense of a social, political, or organizational focus, and have argued for more attention to power and the political in assessing action on nutrition (Pinstrup-Andersen 1993, Pelletier 2001, Heaver 2005). But the call for more political nutrition work is still being made (Nisbett, Gillespie et al. 2014), and this is largely, if the responses to these interviews are representative, because many of those in the international nutrition community are not aware that our training and orientation predisposes us to a technical bias; the subjectivities are hidden even from ourselves. What is important is not that nutrition researchers stop creating new knowledge of course, but that academics, policy makers and practitioners acknowledge its limitations, and reflect on the limits that the ascendant paradigms, popular framings, and dominant forms of knowledge might impose on what may be done in their name.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has combined insights from analysis of literature and interviews covering the history of international nutrition, in light of the broader anthropology of development literature. These various sources are used to illustrate several key features of discourses which may be useful to understand in order to get a clearer sense of the historical and political landscape in which international nutrition issues are framed and paradigms formed. These include the concept of conflict among paradigms and among the actors that propagate them; the role of discursive strategies and framings as ‘strategically ambiguous’ to bring diverse actors together, though with sometimes contradictory actions in pursuit of a common stated goal; and the ‘rendering technical’ of complex, often politically-charged processes in order to more simply frame a response. Each of these plays out in the field of international nutrition, problematizing food and nutrition issues in certain ways, with implications for what is done to address them.

Internationally, several distinct narratives of nutrition can be seen to have emerged over time, with impacts on how international nutrition policy and practice is seen today. Contemporary paradigms are harder to define without the benefit of hindsight, but currently the framing of key aspects of international nutrition is consciously being shaped through these discursive strategies, and particularly so since the advent of the SUN movement. Framing revolves around child stunting as the primary outcome of interest, largely due to its effect on future health and economic productivity; the importance of both nutrition-specific (health sector-based) and nutrition-sensitive (including other sectors) and therefore often multi-sectoral actions in addressing these issues; and malnutrition as distinct from hunger. In order to bring these new understandings into nutrition policy debates, nutritionists have consciously distanced themselves from previously dominant issues, such as hunger, in favour of new framings of malnutrition, and therefore changed the responses required to fix the problem as framed. Large parts of the international nutrition community – in research organisations, financial donor institutions, NGOs and the UN system – have created and accepted these narratives as central to their work; influential academic publications (financed by the same development donors) have publicised them widely; and networks such as SUN are encouraging countries to find ways to make them tangible in policies and programmes.

Early anthropology of development work determined that the production and circulation of discourses is an integral part of the exercise of power (Escobar 1997), with

dominant narratives propagating the ideas which manifest as policy. This power could be exercised for benign purposes (such as the eradication of malnutrition) but the process of advancing a discourse is still an exercise in placing one set of views over another. A major issue that has come of this time and again in international development and nutrition projects is that a lack of understanding of a social and political context into which a set of external ideas is inserted gives rise to project failures and unintended consequences. Ferguson (1994) goes as far as to assert that development projects commonly do not achieve their stated objectives because projects are based on constructions of contexts that are not grounded in reality but rather on the needs of those intervening; the consequence of development projects is therefore often an expansion of state power and global economic forces into the further reaches of poor countries, without achievement of stated development goals for those residing there. Going further, Mosse (2005) finds that development projects are upward-facing, designed and implemented to maintain an image of success for donors and national actors while adapting to circumstances on the ground to maintain this mirage. Given that international nutrition sits squarely within broader international development efforts, and given the central role of international development in the political life of most low-income countries, it follows that the concepts and narratives propagated by global epistemic communities are likely to have influenced how nutrition policy and action play out nationally. The chapters below explore this premise in the Zambian context.

4 Maize, money and malnutrition: the Zambian context

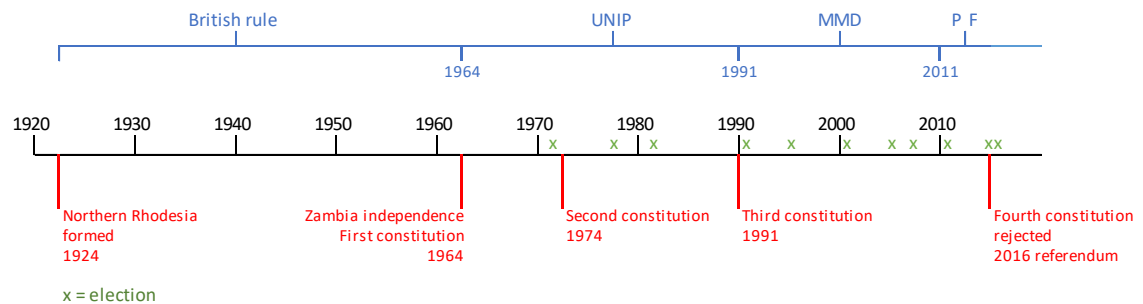
The geographical context of the case study section of this research is in Zambia, both at a national level in terms of the nutrition situation and subsequent policy agendas, and at a local level in one district of central Zambia which has been at the forefront of efforts to understand the implementation of nutrition policy. The aim of this chapter is to provide relevant background on Zambian political economy as relates to nutrition, to provide information needed to interpret the subsequent empirical chapters.

The Republic of Zambia attained independence after 40 years of British colonial rule as Northern Rhodesia in October 1964, instituting its first constitution the same year (Figure 4.1). Starting out as a three-party political system, the government within ten years had passed a second constitution limiting the political system to a 'one-party democracy' under the African-socialist United National Independence Party (UNIP), led by the first President of the Republic, Kenneth Kaunda. Zambia did not achieve a multi-party electoral system again until 1991; for the intervening 27 years Kaunda, a former freedom fighter who was instrumental in Zambia's independence struggle and supported those in many neighbouring countries, ruled for his party with policy direction based on a socialist-humanist philosophy. With the institution of the third constitution in 1991 (and as a result of popular agitation and international pressure), multi-party elections were restored and the social-democratic Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) under Frederick Chiluba came to power peacefully on a platform of change. Three successive presidents ruled for the MMD over the subsequent 20 years, and regular (if not always transparent) elections were held every five years (Burnell 2001).

With the increasing reach of globalization and the imposition of structural adjustment reforms in the 1990s, Zambia's development focus shifted from a broadly socialist stance to an increasingly neoliberal one (Sekwat 2000), and this dominant neoliberal development paradigm has coexisted with the centre-left and socialist professions of political parties since. In the 2011 elections the ruling party changed peacefully again, with the social-democratic Patriotic Front (PF, a breakaway party of the MMD) taking power. Three presidents have ruled under PF to 2017: after president Michael Sata died in office in 2014, Guy Scott briefly became the first white leader of an African country since the end of colonialism as acting president, before the current incumbent, Edgar Lungu, narrowly won in a 2015 snap election, and very narrowly won a contested general election in 2016, at which election a new constitution was defeated due to lack of sufficient voter turnout. Thus Zambia's recent political history is

marked by a forty year colonial period, followed by almost thirty years of experiment with a one-party socialist state, and the last twenty-five years have brought democratic elections and capitalism more firmly into the country's previously socialist political economy.

Figure 4.1: Zambian constitutional and electoral history



Source: Author's creation from multiple sources, including Burnell 2001

Zambia today is a diverse country of 73 ethnic groups concentrated in different geographic parts of the country, but is largely peaceful under its motto of 'One Zambia, One Nation', with its many Christian denominations coexisting with traditional beliefs and small minorities of other religions. Zambian bureaucracy divides the country into ten provinces and 103 districts, the lowest level of government administration. The Zambian government is formally committed in the Local Government Act (1995) and the National Decentralization Policy (2002) to pursue decentralization by devolution of authority, function and resources to lower levels of government; the 2009 Decentralization Implementation Plan operationalizes the policy, but decentralization is ongoing and likely to be a long-term process. The population of a little over 16 million is growing rapidly, with a fertility rate of over six children per woman (Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Health et al. 2014); the population is still sparse in rural areas, with homesteads tending to be far apart and land plentiful, but Zambia is one of the most highly urbanized countries in Africa, with 44 percent of the population concentrated in urban areas (Hawkes, Harris et al. 2017).

Zambia has rich land and water resources, with land administered by a dual system involving government land titles and traditional land allocations by village chiefs. A majority of the rural population engages in mostly rain-fed semi-subsistence agriculture, while Zambia's copper deposits form the bulk of government revenues and foreign exchange, fuelling the

urban economy. In 2011, the World Bank declared Zambia to be a middle-income country. While GDP per capita has risen significantly over the past 20 years, both poverty (percentage of the population living on less than USD 1.90 per day) and inequality (GINI coefficient of income inequality) have also risen¹³; the GINI index of inequality shows Zambia with a score of 57/100, ranking it one of the most unequal countries in the world (138th of 145 countries) (IFPRI 2015). This inequality has been explained as the result of policy decisions during and after colonialization, related to the prioritization of mining and the associated urban working class, to the detriment of agriculture and the rural poor (and therefore also to some extent directly to the detriment of food production and nutrition, also) (Andersson, Bigsten et al. 2000).

4.1 Nutrition by numbers: characteristics of the issue in Zambia

4.1.1 Diet and disease: underpinning nutrition

The UNICEF framework of malnutrition (UNICEF 1990) identifies diet and disease at the individual level as the immediate determinants of nutritional status, and aspects of food, health and care at the household and societal level underlying these. In Zambia, food is maize: Maize is the major food security crop, with a large majority of households reporting growing maize each year, including richer urban households who often have a piece of land cultivated in a rural area (Kakeya, Sugiyama et al. 2006). The introduction of maize to Zambia before colonial times, and its promotion as an aspirational crop by the colonial government, resulted in a gradual shift from consumption of indigenous crops like millet, sorghum and cassava, so much so that today the role of these traditional staples has been marginalized in favour of maize (Sitko 2008). In Zambia, cereals contribute the major part of the food energy supply whilst nutrient-rich foods such as legumes, animal-source foods and fruits and vegetables are only a minor contributor. Traditional diets based on *Nshima* (maize meal porridge) are still eaten by preference by a majority of Zambians, with meals very high in starches and generally low in nutrients (Nyirenda, Musukwa et al. 2007). The accompanying relishes (ranging from a light vegetable sauce to more substantial meat or bean based broths) change throughout the year by season, but it has been observed that the consumption of indigenous vegetables has also declined in the wake of the introduction of a narrow selection of introduced varieties

¹³ World Bank 2016 (accessed April 2016): <http://data.worldbank.org/>

(Mwanamwenge and Harris 2017). Thus rural Zambian diets in particular are characterized by monotony and periods of seasonal scarcity, and modern Zambian agriculture relies on a limited number of non-indigenous crops.

Beyond calories from staples such as maize, the availability of calories per person from nutrient- dense non-staple foods is vital for dietary quality. However, the availability of calories from pulses, fish, eggs, and milk reduced from already low levels since the 1970s, and there was no change in the very low availability of calories from fruits and vegetables or meat (Harris, Chisanga et al. forthcoming). In addition over this time there was a doubling of availability of fats, oils and starchy foods. Currently, Zambia has a positive trade balance of cereals, but the trade balance is negative for fruit and vegetables, meat, dairy products and fish (FAO 2016). The availability of nutrient-rich foods through national production and through international trade has barely kept pace or fallen behind population growth, while the availability of foods promoting overweight has increased (Harris, Chisanga et al. forthcoming). Availability of different food groups in Zambia is therefore heading away from the kind of diversity that would be needed to promote diverse and healthy diets. At the same time, food prices in Zambia have fallen in real terms for almost all food groups over the past 20 years (Harris, Chisanga et al. forthcoming). A majority of poorer households in the capital city, Lusaka, still can only access fewer than five food groups out of twelve however, indicating that falling food prices interact with rising inequality to led to different impacts on the affordability of foods for different groups (Crush, Frayne et al. 2011).

At individual level, there is no recent population-level dietary data in Zambia, beyond extrapolating from household expenditures, which does not account for intra-household allocation of foods. In children, the most recent Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) showed that only 22 percent of children aged 6-23 months received foods from four or more food groups, so dietary diversity of these young children was very low (Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Health et al. 2014). The rural-urban divide and the role of inequality is marked: 18 percent of rural children and 31 percent of urban children had at least minimally diverse diets; and while 15 percent of children in the lowest income households achieved this marker, 41 percent in the richest households did (Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Health et al. 2014). This is still strikingly low dietary diversity even for richer households.

In terms of broader health issues, Zambia suffers from a high rate of under-five mortality at 75 per 1000 live births , though this is a substantial improvement since the last

Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and more than halved over the past 15 years (Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Health et al. 2014). An estimated 13 percent of adults 15-49 years old are HIV-positive (Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Health et al. 2014). Fifty-eight percent of children are fully vaccinated at 12 months, and only around half of all children who suffer from diarrhoea, fever or pneumonia received appropriate treatment (Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Health et al. 2014). Use of improved drinking-water sources is low (85% urban, 49% rural), as is access to improved sanitation (56% urban; 34% rural) (UNICEF 2015). Vitamin A supplementation is relatively high nationally (80 – 90 percent for children under one year), but pockets of poor coverage persist. Despite endemic malaria, only 40 percent of under-fives sleep under insecticide-treated nets. Primary health care is free in Zambia for pregnant women and children under five, although barriers to access still exist; fertility rate (6.2 per woman) is very high (Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Health et al. 2014).

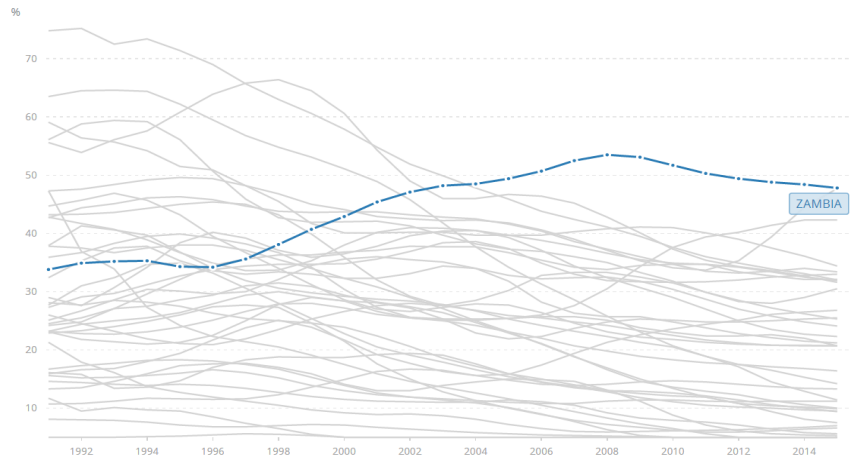
Of the multiplicity of issues that underpin child nutrition outcome numbers therefore, there is survey information telling us that a majority of infants in Zambia are breast-fed appropriately though not optimally according to international guidelines, but that a majority of children are not fed well after this period, when family foods are introduced and diets become monotonous and often affected by seasonal shortage. In addition, infectious diseases of childhood such as fever and diarrhoea are common, affecting the body's ability to utilize what nutrients it does consume. In Zambia, maize remains dominant in the diet for both richer and poorer households, and in addition food availability is moving away from diverse and nutritious diets for much of the population, but there is a lack of data on what people are actually eating and how this might be changing.

4.1.2 Nutrition outcomes

Probably the most recognized form of malnutrition is hunger (technically known as undernourishment), defined as not having enough energy (calories) available from food each day for an active life; hunger occurs particularly seasonally in lean agricultural periods of the year. Per-capita availability of total calories has worsened slightly over time in Zambia, with 48 percent of the population currently classified as undernourished (FAO 2016) (Figure 4.2). This is likely due to a combination of a rapidly increasing population (the denominator for undernourishment calculations) and poor capture of production data that misses much subsistence production (and so reduces the numerator) (Pangaribowo, Gerber et al. 2013). These undernourishment figures put Zambia close to the bottom of global hunger rankings,

and the figures are not accepted by government, though a recent investigation into the data underpinning the calculations confirmed the analysis (Mukuka and Mofu 2016), with undernourishment linked in part to high and rising levels of inequality in Zambia.

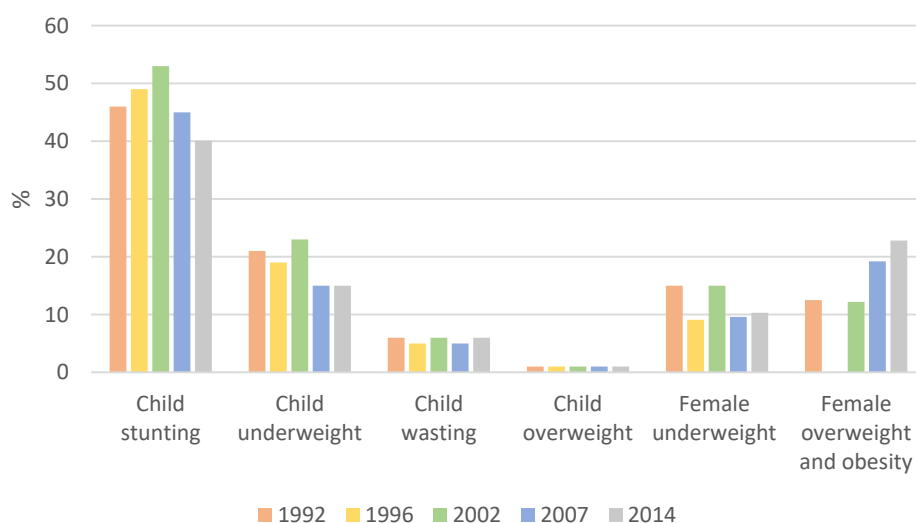
Figure 4.2: Undernourishment (hunger) in Zambia and the African region



Source: World Bank compilation of FAO Food Balance Sheet data

In addition to high levels of (particularly seasonal) hunger, Zambia has a level of chronic malnutrition far beyond the limits defined as acceptable, currently standing at 40 percent stunted growth in children under age five. Overall, stunting increased in surveys from 1992 to 2001 and then reduced by 12 percentage points from 2002 to 2014 (Central Statistical Office et al. 2014) (Figure 4.3). The increase after 1992 has been attributed by some to economic policy changes imposed under structural adjustment, but formal analysis has not been undertaken. The subsequent reduction in stunting since 2002 has been uneven: there has been little change in the lowest wealth quintile (less than one percentage point reduction in stunting between the last two surveys), there was most change in 2nd and 3rd quintiles (7-10pp reduction), and some change in wealthiest quintiles (4-5pp reduction); overall there was a 20 percentage point difference in stunting rates between the richest and poorest quintiles in 2014. There is also a clear rural-urban divide: Mean stunting prevalence is higher in rural areas, but the improvements are greater in rural areas than urban areas, with urban stunting rates standing at 36% and rural at 42%. There are also differences by province (Lusaka has the lowest rates at 36% and Northern the highest at 49%). Stunting is therefore improving overall, but large inequalities in outcomes still exist.

Figure 4.3: Trends in nutrition outcomes for women and children



Sources: Zambia Demographic and Health Surveys 1992-2014

Other nutrition indicators do not tell such a story of improvement as stunting (Figure 4.3). Zambia is among the countries in Sub-Sahara Africa that struggled to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), missing targets in MDG1 on halving the proportion of undernourished population and halving the proportion of underweight under five children by 2015 (Harris, Seco et al. 2014). Underweight (low weight for a child's age), the main nutrition indicator of the MDGs, has remained at 15% since the previous DHS survey seven years earlier, with a fall since 2002 driven by the reduction in stunting (Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Health et al. 2014). Wasting, a measure of acute malnutrition associated with infection and high mortality, has stood at 5 to 6 percent since the 1990s (Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Health et al. 2014). In addition, 15 percent of children under five are zinc deficient, 20 percent are vitamin A deficient (though this appears to have reduced by almost 50 per cent in a decade), 21 per cent are iron deficient (with 56 per cent anaemic), and 87 percent are deficient in vitamin B₁₂ (NFNC 2013). Zambia also mirrors other lower-middle income countries in having an increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity in women, which has risen significantly from 12 percent in 2002 to 23 percent in 2014 (Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Health et al. 2014).

Thus according to various measures, Zambia has high levels of various forms of malnutrition, in particular hunger and stunting, but with a growing problem of overweight. In

addition, there are issues with several of the known underlying determinants of nutrition outcomes, particularly poor childhood diets and disease; and data are lacking on many related issues, particularly population diets, limiting informed response. Critically, many respondents in this research professed to have been unaware until the last five years or so of the high stunting figures, and of the links between issues of diet and disease that underpin these in modern nutrition thinking. The hunger numbers too are disputed by many in Zambia, where food insecurity is an acknowledged fact particularly of rural life, but the government narrative of increased maize yields year on year is at odds with these figures. Thus it is only in recent years that the available data have been made particularly visible, and then only within parts of the nutrition community working directly on these issues.

4.2 The long road: a brief history of Zambian nutrition policy

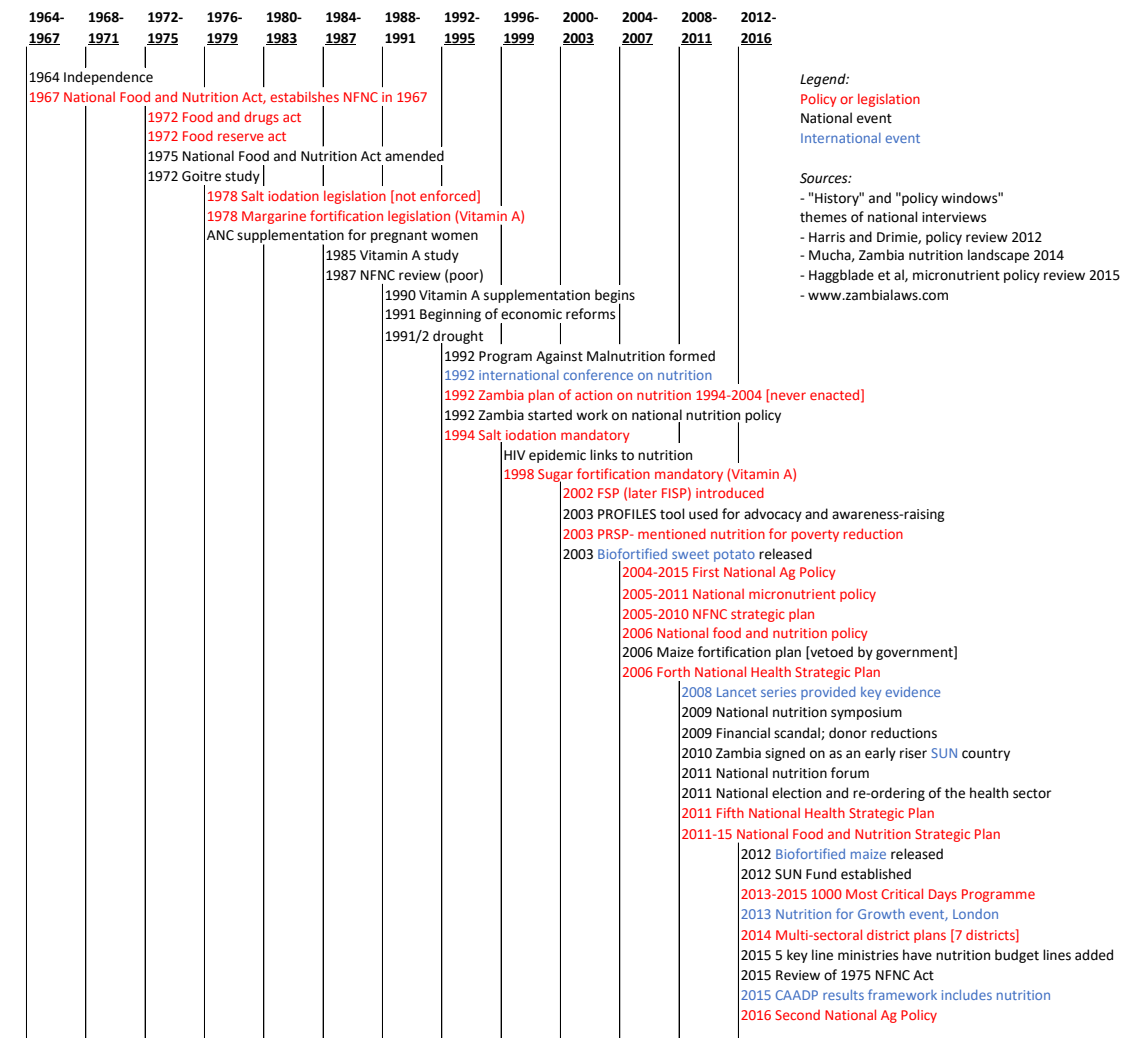
A broad timeline of food and nutrition policy and key events since Zambia's independence in 1964 is shown in Figure 4.4. Early actions for nutrition in the emerging state included the Act of Parliament establishing a national nutrition coordinating body - the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) - in 1967 under the Ministry of Health (MOH), and the amendment of the Act in 1975 to include provision for the setup of community nutrition groups and their registration with the NFNC. Thus from early in the life of an independent Zambia, nutrition policy was created and implemented under the health sector, with the MOH responsible for setting nutrition policy and the NFNC being responsible for technical support and implementation of nutrition programmes.

4.2.1 Nutrition policy in the health sector

The health sector has therefore been the official home of nutrition in Zambia, with the forth National Health Sector Policy (NHSP, 2006) mentioning nutrition 43 times across multiple areas of health policy. While nutrition is mentioned a lot in this policy, and is noted as key to issues such as the national HIV and TB responses as well as in and of itself, the policy focuses on describing the prevalence and causes of poor nutrition in the country, and actual interventions, outputs and targets are under-specified. The fifth NHSP (2011) mentions nutrition fewer times (32) but starts to build more strategy, albeit still under-specified. The 2011 policy specifies nutrition action in micronutrient supplementation, promotion of improved infant and young child feeding, treatment and integrated management of acute malnutrition across communities and health centres, and integration into school health and

nutrition programmes. Zambia is to date still developing clinical nutrition guidelines and dietary guidelines however, and nutrition remains a minor aspect of overall Zambian health policy.

Figure 4.4: Timeline of key policy events



Within this health policy landscape, programmes specifically on nutrition have existed since the 1970s. Zambia focused largely on delivery of single micronutrients in national programmes from 1972 to 1992; in the late 1970s programmes were started for tackling iodine, iron and vitamin A deficiencies, spanning fortification and supplementation initiatives through the private sector and national health system. These broadly successful micronutrient programs have seen iodine and vitamin A deficiencies greatly reduced and micronutrient

interventions cover significant portions of the population, and these initiatives continue in some form to the present day (Haggblade et al. 2016), though other micronutrient deficiencies not covered by these single-nutrient initiatives persist (NFNC 2013). In the 1990s, the focus shifted towards infant and young child feeding (IYCF) and nutrition education in the context of HIV, and these two strands – micronutrient provision and nutrition education linked to growth monitoring –formed the core of Zambian nutrition activities in subsequent years.

The early 1990s saw several events that sent shocks through Zambia, including significant changes in governance through the introduction of multi-party politics after a period of single party rule; significant changes in social spending through internationally-imposed economic reforms under structural adjustment, and subsequent currency devaluation and economic shock; a devastating HIV epidemic and subsequent social and health system stress; and a severe drought and subsequent poor harvests. In 1992, the Programme Against Malnutrition (PAM) was launched to tackle the hunger and undernutrition sparked by the drought and economic reforms; in the same year a large international conference on nutrition (ICN1) endorsed a world plan of action on nutrition, and called for all countries to have a nutrition strategy in place¹⁴. Zambia subsequently wrote a national plan of action on nutrition, but this was rejected by legislators as it didn't have the backing of any formal policy documents, so it was never enacted, and work was begun instead on a national nutrition policy. Despite several possible advocacy windows that could have put nutrition on the map in Zambia (including the HIV epidemic in the 1990s and 2000s; and strategic advocacy efforts using the Profiles advocacy tool under a USAID nutrition project in 2003), the National Food and Nutrition Policy (NFNP) was not completed until almost 15 years later in 2006, building on and incorporating disparate policies and programmes on infant feeding and micronutrients that had been created in the interim.

4.2.2 Nutrition policy in the agriculture sector

Despite high levels of subsistence farming, recurrent drought and seasonal food insecurity, nutrition has historically not been a preoccupation of the agriculture sector, which has focussed on increasing production of staple grains to feed a growing population, and therefore on food security in a narrow sense. Maize is the staple food particularly for poor rural Zambians, but also the food of choice for urban families, comprising a bulk of daily

¹⁴ International conference on nutrition, 1992: <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/61254/1/a34812.pdf>

calories in poorer households (Nyirenda, Musukwa et al. 2007); maize is central to Zambian diets and traditional culture, and most people in Zambia would say that if you haven't eaten the traditional firm maize meal porridge (*Nshima*) in a day, you haven't eaten at all (Richards 1939). Much of Zambia's agricultural policy has therefore been concerned with maize production.

Maize is not an indigenous crop to Africa, but was introduced from the New World by slave traders as a durable grain for long sea voyages, and later promoted by colonial governments as a transportable foodstuff to fuel workers in urban and mining centres (Sitko 2008). During colonial rule, maize production was limited to white landowners and a few African farmers labelled 'advanced', hence it has been claimed that despite Zambia's generally unsuitable agro-ecological context, the production of maize through intensive methods remains linked in the collective psyche with progress, modernity and good farming, and so has retained a hold on the country's agricultural approach even since independence (Sitko 2008, Chapoto, Zulu-Mbata et al. 2015). The major focus of the sector remains national food security through staple food production, normally equated in political rhetoric with maize self-sufficiency, with a majority of agricultural budgets going to two key food security programmes: the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) and the Food Reserve Agency (FRA). The FRA was set up in 1972 and later amended in 1996 and 2005, to buy maize from farmers at guaranteed prices and form a strategic grain reserve to modulate national grain prices (Chapoto, Zulu-Mbata et al. 2015). Building on the idea of maize control boards introduced in colonial times to limit maize production to approved farmers, and continued after independence to provide isolated rural areas with access to a market and the cash economy (Sitko 2008), the FRA is effectively a government output subsidy. The FISP programme was introduced as the Fertiliser Support Programme (FSP) in 2002 to distribute inorganic fertilisers to farmer groups, and later renamed FISP when other inputs such as hybrid maize seed were included in the distribution. FISP is an input subsidy aimed at improving the asset base of small farmers, though assessments of the programme have found that poorer farming households cannot access the programme, which therefore tends to benefit mainly wealthier farmers (Chapoto, Zulu-Mbata et al. 2015). These two programmes – FRA and FISP – together have accounted for upwards of 80 percent of the national agriculture budget over the past seven years (Kuteya, Sitko et al. 2016), despite repeatedly being found to be poorly targeted and not cost effective (Chapoto, Zulu-Mbata et al. 2015). Due in part to these negative findings, change to FISP has already started, with a pilot of an electronic voucher payment system undertaken in 13 districts in the

2015/16 agricultural season which enabled recipients to choose among seed and fertiliser options available at local distributors and agro-dealers, expanded to 39 additional districts in 2016/17¹⁵. However, only about 15% of households redeemed the agricultural inputs voucher for items other than maize and fertilizer (Kuteya, Sitko et al. 2016), either because demand was not high or inputs were not available for more diverse produce.

Thus agriculture policies have focussed on reducing food insecurity to tackle hunger, but the major FISP and FRA programmes do not explicitly tackle malnutrition. The first National Agriculture Policy (NAP, 2004) mentioned human nutrition three times, in relation to activities of food processing, plant breeding for improved food quality, and fish production; the policy did not mention diets at all, which is arguably the major contribution of the agriculture sector to nutrition. The second NAP (2016) incorporated nutrition more fully into its mandate, including in its over-arching vision, mentioning nutrition twelve times (though still not diets), and dedicating one of its 12 objectives to improving nutrition through the food and agriculture sector. Therefore written agriculture policy is incorporating nutrition considerations more explicitly, though the focus of the sector remains agriculture as an engine of economic development and food security in the rural population.

4.2.3 Multi-sectoral nutrition policy

Current nutrition policy and strategy in Zambia has emerged largely during the past decade, and while created within the health sector, increasingly includes reference to sectors outside of health (Harris, Drimie et al. 2017). In particular, calls from the nutrition community relate to the agriculture sector and reform of food security policy to consider diet quality. Other key programmes relating to nutrition include the Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare implementation of the food security pack (FSP), which is a social safety net programme targeting ‘vulnerable but viable’ small-scale farming households (those at a lower level than would benefit from FISP), and provides a separate but similar agricultural input package explicitly aiming for household food security. The Ministry of Education implements a home-grown school feeding programme and nutrition education in collaboration with WFP. The government also started providing social cash transfers in 2014, with a pilot study finding that the transfers had the potential to improve child nutrition in the presence of clean water

¹⁵ FISP reform: <http://www.musika.org.zm/article/84-fisp-electronic-voucher-program-to-promote-diversification>

and maternal education (Seidenfeld 2014). The government has an ambitious roll-out plan for scaling up social cash transfers to reach all districts by 2018, with potential food security and nutrition impacts. There are therefore programmes in several sectors and under several ministries that tackle either food security or malnutrition in different ways.

Within nutrition policy, the 2006 National Food and Nutrition Policy (NFNP) was followed in 2011 by the National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan (NFNSP) and in 2013 by the 1000 Most Critical Days Programme (MCDP). A review of Zambian nutrition-related policies in different sectors prior to 2010 found that Zambia's nutrition policy environment over several decades had been incoherent and uncoordinated (Harris and Drimie 2012). In the decade since the release of the NFNP, which pulled all nutrition policy into one place and superseded the disparate policies and plans that preceded it, a cascade of strategic plans, programme documents, district plans and guidance notes have followed within the nutrition sector, and been broadly complemented by nutrition-related policy in other relevant sectors, giving Zambia - on paper at least - one of the strongest policy environments for nutrition in southern Africa (Harris, Drimie et al. 2017).

It appears there were several drivers for developing the NFNP, culminating in 2006: The economic situation around structural adjustment and hyperinflation from the late 1980s into the 1990s significantly reduced public services (including health services) and purchasing power of households, and the increased undernutrition rates revealed in national surveys caused concern to nutrition professionals. Within the nutrition community, an increased professional capacity and confidence in senior nutritionists grew as more NFNP staff received training overseas and through technical assistance in Zambia; greater exposure was experienced in terms of what was possible in collaborative interactions with other stakeholders nationally and internationally; and there was a galvanizing impact of the nutrition profession group the Nutrition Association of Zambia (NAZ) which became more active in bringing the few nutritionists in the country together. In addition, significant progress had been made on development of other nutrition policy, particularly on micronutrients and breastfeeding, creating the feeling that the country may end up with many distinct policies on different aspects of nutrition, so consensus was reached that it was better to have a single policy that addressed issues more comprehensively.

At the same time as international momentum was picking up for nutrition with the Lancet series and the advent of SUN, two important national events put nutrition squarely on

the map in Zambia also. In the wake of the NFNP and Lancet series, in mid-2009 the Zambian nutrition community had been taking stock of action on malnutrition and organized a National Food and Nutrition Symposium under the theme “Food and nutrition in the 21st Century: Which Way Forward?”. The Symposium sought to bring together national nutrition actors and international development partners to share experiences and evidence, critique existing policies and programmes, and reach consensus on a way forward for nutrition in Zambia. A key outcome of the Symposium was recognition of a need for a strategic plan to operationalize the NFNP, so the National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan (NFNSP) 2011-2015 was drafted over the following two years, detailing eleven strategic directions to deal with multiple aspects of nutrition in Zambia.

Once the NFNSP was drafted, there were concerns about delays to implementation caused by lack of funding and institutional capacity to roll it out, so in culmination of multiple multi-stakeholder consultative meetings, meetings with ministers, and media briefings, a second event, the Food and Nutrition Consultative Forum, was convened in early 2011, to coincide with the country’s new membership of SUN. The 2011 forum was opened by the President of Zambia, and over one hundred participants came from government, development partners, national and international NGOs, academia and the private sector. The Forum explicitly aimed at taking the NFNSP forward into action through improving understanding of what multi-sectoral implementation means; reaching consensus on priority actions; reviewing strategic national nutrition commitments; and developing a roadmap for action to address chronic malnutrition. Resolutions at the Forum drew strongly on international strategy articulated through the Lancet publications and best practice documents, and participants (guided by key international donors) made the decision to prioritize chronic malnutrition (stunting) and the ‘1000 days’ period (Seco, Sadlier et al. 2014), noting that other aspects of nutrition detailed in the comprehensive NFNSP were important but less likely to be funded by international donors.

The subsequent First 1000 Most Critical Days Programme (MCDP) 2013-15 (extended to 2017) operationalized the first strategic direction of the NFNSP which aims to reduce levels of stunting in children. Even with the MCDP in place and backed up by policy and broad consensus across government and development partners, with the focus narrowed to one

strategic direction out of the eleven identified in the NFNSP¹⁶ as important, and with significant donor funding, there were still not the financial or human resources available to roll out the nutrition programme across Zambia, so the decision was taken in 2013 to pilot the MCDP in 14 high-burden districts (out of 106) in an initial phase, documenting both process and outcomes. The MCDP was written in collaboration with, and aimed for implementation by, five ministries which would implement different elements according to their sectoral mandates: Health, agriculture, education, water and sanitation, and social welfare. Thus in order to operationalize the program, multi-sectoral plans were needed at the level of implementation, which in Zambia is the district as the lowest level of government administration. Multi-sectoral district nutrition plans (MSPs) were drafted throughout 2013 in 7 of the 14 pilot districts, facilitated by the NFNC and working with representatives of each of the five ministries at district level, and these are currently being funded by donors and implementation of the MCDP is starting, slowly, through a combination of government ministries and NGOs.

4.3 Actors and organizations: national nutrition governance

Nutrition is a small field of international development in terms of numbers of people engaged explicitly in addressing the issue, but one that encompasses a wide range of actors whose actions may impact results; it has been noted that *‘efforts to reduce undernutrition will involve more than the usual number of potentially disparate interests’* due to the inherently multi-causal nature of the issue (Nisbett, Gillespie et al. 2014). As with many development issues, stakeholders involved in nutrition comprise a multitude of different organizations and their staff, from international financial donors, academic institutes, and civil society organizations; to an increasing and controversial role for the private sector; and the policy and political actors in the nation states in which development plays out, as well as their citizens. Different to many development issues however, in nutrition actions from several different sectors will directly impact outcomes, and so several different sectors have been involved in designing and implementing nutrition-relevant policy in Zambia. Key among them are the Ministry of Health (MOH), broadly tasked with specific nutrition policy; the Ministry of

¹⁶ Strategic areas in the NFNSP: 1) Stunting. 2) Low birth weight. 3) Underweight. 4) Wasting. 5) Child overweight. 6) Maternal nutrition. 7) Micronutrient deficiencies. 8) HIV nutrition. 9) Chronic disease. 10) Emergency nutrition. 11) Nutrition in decentralized health systems

Agriculture and Livestock (MAL), broadly tasked with food policy; and the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC), broadly tasked with technical input into nutrition-relevant policy and coordination and oversight of food and nutrition policy implementation. Working alongside these state actors are a plethora of national and international NGOs; key UN agencies; and a core group of donors, mostly aligned around various elements of the SUN movement in the country. In addition, there are private sector food companies, academic institutions, and the media who all play different roles.

Due to the predominance of health-based interventions for nutrition, the health sector has traditionally ‘owned’ nutrition, in Zambia as elsewhere, with policy rooted in the ministry of health. In recent years there has however been some politicking with the community health functions of the sector, which covers many nutrition programmes. In 2011, the incoming PF government split the MOH into two constituent parts, with the MOH continuing to have jurisdiction over specialist teaching hospitals, secondary care, and policy; while the Ministry of Community Development was renamed Ministry of Community Development Maternal and Child Health (MCDMCH) with a mandate for primary care and specifically ‘mother and child health’, giving it jurisdiction over community-level service implementation. This sudden split remains largely unexplained in policy analysis, though has been claimed as a bias on the part of the then-Minister, Deputy Minister and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Community Development, all of whom were medical doctors¹⁷, and may also have had a political aspect for the new government. The lack of planning for this split and subsequent uncertainty over roles and responsibilities set government nutrition programs back for a number of years according to interview respondents for this research, but administrative issues settled by 2014, only for the decision to be reversed in the President’s 2015 parliamentary assembly speech with no preamble or explanation¹⁸ with maternal and child health elements reverting to MOH. Within the MOH (and formerly MCDMCH) there are putative positions for nutritionists at each administrative level (national, province, and district); however, not all of these positions are filled and capacity across the positions varies due to an ongoing human resource crisis in the health sector. MOH figures in 2005 noted that 65 out of a recommended 200 nutritionist

¹⁷ Zambia Watchdog: <https://www.zambiawatchdog.com/whistle-blower-ministry-of-health-split-into-two/>

¹⁸ President of Zambia 2015 Parliamentary Assembly speech: http://www.parliament.gov.zm/sites/default/files/images/publication_docs/Speech%2C%20Official%20Opening%20of%20the%205th%20Session%20of%2011th%20Assembly.pdf

positions at all levels were currently filled, rising to 112 out of 200 in 2009 – a capacity gap of 44 percent which while high, is lower than the gap for doctors (65 percent) nurses (57 percent) and midwives (58 percent)¹⁹.

The NFNC was established as an autonomous entity within the MOH through the National Food and Nutrition Act of 1967. Ahead of its time among African nations, this act mandates the NFNC to collect data on nutrition in Zambia, to promote activities and programmes to improve diets and nutrition, and to advise the government on nutrition policy, including providing leadership on food and nutrition matters; policy implementation; advocacy; monitoring, evaluation, and research; nutrition education and promotion; micronutrient control programs; HIV-nutrition and infant feeding programs; and capacity building and human resource development for nutrition. The Act was amended in 1975 to include provision for the setup of community nutrition groups and their registration with the NFNC, a core part of the Commission's original strategy that has since fallen into neglect until recent attention from SUN. Technical capacity within the NFNC has been noted to be weak, predominantly due to the historic lack of nutrition training beyond diploma level in Zambia, and too few staff members for the multiple roles required of them (Covic and et al 2013); strategic capacity for policy promotion and coordination has also been weak, partly due to NFNC's placement within MOH and lack of convening power over other ministries, though continued support from NGOs aligned to SUN and new leadership in 2015 has worked on this and proposals under a new review of the Act propose moving the NFNC to a stronger ministry, such as the Office of the Vice President.

Agriculture is the other major sector for nutrition, with jurisdiction over food production matters in Zambia. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) plays an active role in the development of agriculture in Zambia, with established structures in place from the national through to the community level, and has an extensive agricultural extension service which is largely hampered by significant funding and training deficits. MAL's main agricultural (and budgetary) focus is on cereal crops (particularly the politically-sensitive subsistence crop, maize) under the department of agriculture, but also has departments dedicated to livestock, fisheries, seed control, agribusiness, and policy. MAL has a food and nutrition section (FNS) which advocates a food-based approach as the primary tool for improving the quality of the

¹⁹ Zambia MoH Strategic Plan 2011

Zambian diet, improving nutrition, and supporting rural livelihoods. FNS is housed under the agriculture department of the Ministry; as with the NFNC, this placement limits FNS' interactions ministry-wide with other departments such as fisheries or livestock, over which it has no jurisdiction and no formal bureaucratic links. FNS has three staff members at national level, and according to human resource plans should be staffed with one food and nutrition officer in each district, although many of these posts are vacant or acting.

Key to renewed momentum and increased policy activity in recent years, Zambia joined the SUN movement as an 'early riser' country in 2010, guided by international development partners in the country, and since then SUN has catalysed the convening of working groups to work towards implementation of the nutrition strategy. These bring together civil society (under the banner of the SUN Civil Society Organizations Alliance, CSOSUN); private sector (under the SUN business network); academia (bringing together research institutes and universities); a government group (comprising the NFNC and representatives of five key operational ministries involved in implementing nutrition-related programs); and a donor group channelling finance through a multilateral SUN Fund. Additionally in Zambia, SUN has catalysed the creation of a cabinet committee for nutrition, a group of interested MPs in parliament who are being educated and supported to bring nutrition issues into policy discussions. This committee is currently nascent and sporadic, but is constituted within parliament and has met and called debates.

Then there are national NGOs, though these tend to be under-funded unless linked to international NGOs, and undertaking small and geographically limited projects. For nutrition, the predominant national civil society organization in Zambia has emerged as CSOSUN, a small national NGO created through collaboration between SUN and the NFNC, and as such not entirely autonomous from either government or international actors, but working alongside both. CSOSUN's focus has been on advocacy, both to the government for more budgetary commitment and visibility for nutrition, and to the population through the media for awareness-raising around stunting numbers and the importance of the first 1000 days. CSOSUN was created as a link to and spokesperson for smaller national NGOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) working on nutrition issues around the country, and is also a conduit of international funds for many of these. Alongside CSOSUN, Zambian civil society comes in different forms: The leading NGO working on nutrition issues until recently has been the Programme Against Malnutrition (PAM), a domestic parastatal and later NGO launched in

1992 to tackle the hunger and undernutrition sparked by the 1991-2 drought and structural adjustment economic reforms. Despite relatively high numbers of NGOs, due to funding and capacity limitations national civil society beyond PAM and CSOSUN is not particularly active in nutrition policy debates in Zambia, and research has suggested that *‘there are still too few openings for civil society to participate in social and political decision making, or to demand transparency and accountability in the activities of the government and administration’*.²⁰

An organization with less overt international backing, the Nutrition Association of Zambia (NAZ) has existed since the early 1990s to provide leadership from within the nutrition profession through advocacy, guidance to the profession, and providing a forum for professional linkages. The association comprises over 100 members who provide their time voluntarily while working in nutrition jobs with government, UN, NGO and business organizations; many of its members are now strategically placed within leadership positions across the nutrition terrain in Zambia. NAZ tends to be less of a public face of nutrition than either the NFNC or CSOSUN, but has been working largely behind the scenes in Zambia for several decades with little funding. Its members have been instrumental in recognizing and seizing the opportunities for nutrition funding and action presented by both national and international events. In 2016, SUN funding has provided NAZ with an office and two full-time administrative staff members, perhaps in recognition of these key roles. Finally, churches are particularly active in Zambia, and various faith groups are involved in disparate food security and nutrition initiatives at the community level that are not well documented; and the technical and research agencies present in Zambia (ZARI, IITA, IAPRI) provide largely agriculture-focussed nutrition research.

Finally, there is a large international presence working on the issue of nutrition, including UN agencies (WFP, UNICEF, FAO, WHO) and a range of NGOs (Care, Concern Worldwide, Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children, SNV) providing direct services and performing technical assistance, management and advocacy. As internationally, UNICEF has tended to lead from the UN side on maternal and child nutrition, and nutrition specific community programmes; WHO on treatment of acute malnutrition and health-sector based programmes such as supplementation campaigns; FAO on food based issues with the

²⁰ GIZ Civil society participation in governance reform processes and poverty reduction programme: <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/20824.html>

agriculture sector; and WFP on private sector engagement. Care and Concern are the NGOs most heavily involved in nutrition programme delivery and nutrition policy advocacy in Zambia, but several others have smaller nutrition programmes.

4.4 Funding strategically: foreign aid in Zambia

Post-independence, many ex-colonial powers provided financial aid to Zambia, even while exploiting its raw materials, and initially without explicit focus on supporting the various social services for which the Zambian government was responsible; thus from the very start of independence, foreign aid became an integral part of the Zambian economy (Fagernäs and Roberts 2004). While it is difficult to separate out the different forms of aid in calculations, total Official Development Assistance (ODA) from country members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) rose from very low levels in the 1960s and 70s, to a high of two billion US dollars in 1995, to around one billion dollars per year for the past decade²¹, and net ODA averaged 12% of Gross National Income (GNI) over the decade to 2009²². In addition, there are numerous international and national NGOs and agencies directly providing projects which supplement or replace government services, which might also be counted as aid.

In addition to being a consistent recipient of aid, Zambia has often over the past several decades had the dubious distinction of being among the world's most indebted countries. Zambia enjoyed a relatively solvent decade immediately post-independence, with GDP growing by an unprecedented 29% in 1965, predicated on high prices for copper (Zambia's main export and revenue stream) and a government policy focus on supporting the mining industry (to the eventual detriment of others, such as agriculture). In the 1970s however, with the global oil crises, copper prices collapsed and the country's balance of payments to the various richer nations that stepped up to cover budget shortfalls became negative, where it has stayed ever since. Zambia began borrowing heavily to cover its budget deficits, and by the 1980s debt had climbed to over 200% of GDP, and Zambia entered a series of internationally-negotiated structural adjustment programmes to alter its public service structure, grow the economy, and pay down its debts. However, much of the additional funding released was used to service debt interest rather than stimulate investment; external

²¹ Source: World Bank data, accessed August 2016:
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DY.ODA.ALLD.CD?locations=ZM>

²² Source: OECD Aid Effectiveness <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/Zambia%203.pdf>

accounts may have improved, but economic growth was sluggish and still Zambia's debts were accruing (Andersson, Bigsten et al. 2000). A back-and-forth of harsh adjustment policies interspersed with political backtracking to appease a shocked population led to hyperinflation and currency collapse in the early 1990s, as well as privatization and cuts to public services including health, but did not resolve the fundamental economic growth or debt problems. Early in the new millennium it became clear that Zambia, like many other low-income countries, would not be able to service its debts - approaching 7.3 billion US dollars - and international pressure groups pushed for debt forgiveness programmes. In 2001, Zambia entered the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC), obtaining a 50% reduction in its debt burden after two years, and a further 3.9 billion dollar reduction from multiple creditors in 2005. These reductions were predicated on Zambia restructuring its development approach according to the new Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) format, around which development in the country is still organized²³. Thus Zambia's debt burden was greatly reduced in the early part of the millennium through a combination of newly-rising copper revenues and debt forgiveness programmes.

Foreign aid and its associated donors have therefore expanded into powerful political forces in Zambia (Fagernäs and Roberts 2004). Zambia has been described as 'dominated' by its donors since the 1980s, with a weak ability to negotiate with external actors, set its own policy, and act according to its citizens' wishes because of debt, aid dependency, and a lack of global strategic importance, and based on (previously) low political legitimacy of ruling parties, lack of political ideological clarity, and a combination of material factors including the vagaries of the copper markets and subsequent focus on the country's reputation with international donors (Fraser 2007). The Zambian government in effect gave up trying to control its fate in some donor-dominated sectors, including the sector under which nutrition has traditionally fallen, as the former Minister of Health wrote in a 1998 document: *'In the Zambian context, the phrase 'donor coordination' is a misnomer. In the past the Ministry of Health attempted to coordinate donors, did not succeed, and later realized that this was not possible. From this experience it concluded that donors cannot effectively be coordinated, because they are development agencies of sovereign countries with their own cultures, hidden agendas, and*

²³ Sources: IMF news : <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2015/09/14/01/49/pr0580>; Jubilee Debt Programme : <http://jubileedebt.org.uk/countries/zambia>; Policy Dialogue Programme : http://policydialogue.org/publications/backgrounders/casestudies/debt_relief_and_hipc_zambia/en/

biases. Accordingly, the ministry has stopped coordinating donors as such, but successfully coordinates programs and activities through its health sector support policy' (Kalumba and Musowe 1998).

Aid is therefore big business in Zambia, providing an important share of government expenditure and project funding, but corruption has been cited as a major obstacle to continued support, where *'Zambia remains characterised by informal political processes of patronage and corruption, whereby foreign aid and public resources can be (mis)used to sustain incumbent and patronage politics linked to the executive'* (Rakner 2012). Transparency International holds several indices of corruption, freedom and governance, and Zambia, while having improved over time with its investigation and prosecution of corruption, scores in the lower half for all of them; public perceptions hold only the police as more corrupt than political parties, and corruption is perceived to be high in the education and health services²⁴. Health sector spending, under which the majority of nutrition work has traditionally fallen, is particularly supported by donor funds: external resources as a percent of total health expenditure rose from 10% in 1995 to a high of 43% in 2008, and still represent over a third of health sector funding. This leaves the sector vulnerable to international changes of heart; this became acutely clear in 2009, when a corruption scandal in the Zambian health sector led to the temporary suspension of USD 273 million in bilateral aid from several donors, and the MOH running a deficit of USD 5 million per month until a corruption governance plan was agreed; use of health services was documented to decline over this time, though an assessment of impact on health outcomes was never made (Usher 2010, Usher 2015). Similarly, between 17 and 41% of funds for agriculture, the other sector most closely related to nutrition, came from international donors between 2000 and 2008 (de Kemp, Faust et al. 2012).

Receipt of aid and its effects on national policy direction is therefore a political issue in Zambia, with ministers generally seeking to downplay the influence of foreign actors in the country: in 2013, the finance minister announced that *"Zambia's dependence on external aid has reduced considerably [at] now less than five percent of our budget and insignificant as a*

²⁴ Transparency International (accessed October 2015): <http://www.transparency.org/country/#ZMB> Other indices, including the World Bank Governance Indicator, the Zambia Bribe Payers Index, and World Bank Enterprise Surveys, confirm that the country's efforts on corruption have been improving, but the country still faces challenges

*percentage of our GDP*²⁵; and in its 2016 election manifesto, the winning PF party stated its intention to reduce reliance on aid, saying that “*Zambia historically relied on foreign aid for budget support. The PF undertook before coming into power to reverse this trend and reduce foreign aid to bare minimum. Presently, the budget is substantially funded from internally generated revenues as opposed to reliance on donor aid*”. Debt relief, renewed economic growth, and the increased involvement of China as a new form of development partner focused on trade and infrastructure projects had suggested that Zambia may have some respite from its donors in the years after the millennium (Rakner 2012), but history has shown otherwise: Direct aid to government budgets may have fallen, hence the public claims, but project aid is still large and ongoing (even if NGO projects are in general not touching the scale and coverage needed), and foreign debt is still a fact of political life in Zambia. Current government debt stands at just under 50% of GDP, but this is forecast to rise again, with current projections suggesting indebtedness could hit 250% by 2021 if copper prices remain low and Zambia does not find other means to pay its way²⁶. In mid-2016, post-elections, Zambia resumed negotiations with the IMF for a 1.2 billion dollar loan, for instance. In a difficult financial climate, contingent concessional loans are again increasing therefore, reminding Zambia that donors are a constant presence in the political economy landscape of the country for the foreseeable future.

²⁵ Source: Lusaka Voice, August 2013: <http://lusakavoice.com/2013/08/28/zambia-targets-foreign-aid-history/>

²⁶ Source: <https://www.quandl.com/collections/zambia/zambia-economy-data>, based on IMF cross-country macroeconomic datasets

5 Transferring ideas: setting the agenda

Great minds think alike, and fools seldom differ.

- Anon.

Internationally, the World Bank report advocating 'repositioning nutrition' as central to development (2006); the first *Lancet* undernutrition series (2008); the 1000 days programme of the US and Irish governments (2010); and the advent of the SUN movement (2010) each came in quick succession. Each of these initiatives informed the others, and a fairly small group of international academics, donors and NGO managers worked across the different projects. This gathering, refining and streamlining of knowledge and practice around a single narrow concept led to a 'turn to stunting' as a key idea in international nutrition, propagated by a global epistemic community focused on a certain sub-set of issues in nutrition, explained in chapters 1 and 3. A key theme in much policy process literature is the concept of ideas, such as stunting and multi-sectoral action, as central to the agenda setting and policy making process (Mooji and de Vos 2003), explored below.

Explicit ideational factors were neglected and largely missing for many years in policy science work in the 1980s and 90s (though Cairney (2012) argues that ideas were always present implicitly), but with the coming together of policy sciences and constructivist traditions, and a growing dissatisfaction with the ability of non-ideational theories to entirely explain policy change, ideas have gained ground over the past two decades or so (Berman 2001, Finnemore and Sikkink 2001, Shiffman 2007). Ideas are a nebulous concept to pin down in policy work, however, with the concept used for describing anything from broad world-views to specific policy proposals, and defined very broadly as the beliefs, thoughts and opinions of actors. Ideas can be either a dependent or independent variable in untangling policy processes – the thing to be explained in policy research, or the source of explanation– and can be used as roadmaps in the hands of those already holding the power to shape policy, or as weapons in the hands of those seeking to change agendas (Berman 2001, Cairney 2012). Ideas have many postulated roles in the policy process, with shared beliefs leading groups to a common aim; shared ways of understanding an issue leading to the establishment of certain types of knowledge; and shared ideologies leading to dominant norms or standards of

behaviour (Cairney 2012). Thus ideas can be either a constraint on or a resource for policy action, and a source of both stability and instability in the policy process, with a new idea rising to prominence when it is persuasive or resonates in a policy environment, remaining through embodiment in institutions, or falling as anomalies accumulate and it is discredited and replaced (Berman 2001, Finnemore and Sikkink 2001).

Focus on the idea of child stunting is relatively new internationally, and has a technical-rational rationale, and also a discursive-political one: Stunting numbers are generally higher than other nutrition issues within the overall burden of malnutrition, and evidence exists of the human and economic toll of stunting. Stunting is also key to discursive strategies and framings as ‘strategically ambiguous’ to bring different interests on board; and the ‘rendering technical’ of complex political processes in order to more easily frame a response without touching on complex political issues. This chapter follows the agenda of the epistemic community promoting the idea of child stunting in Zambia, tracing the idea through Zambian policy and practice at national and district levels, to assess how an international policy idea plays out in a national political and social context.

5.1 Colonial beginnings: early nutrition framing in Zambia

There is no word that directly translates as ‘nutrition’ in any of the 72 languages and dialects officially recognized in Zambia today. As one respondent in this research put it: *“I would say to a common man in Zambia, nutrition is not known- We know food”*. Food and health have always been preoccupations of any population, but the framing of nutrition as a discipline or a field of action, as has been shown above, is very much based on Western interpretations and scientific understandings. Thus while one of the first and most famous anthropological works on non-European nutrition was undertaken in what is now Zambia (then colonial Northern Rhodesia) in 1939, the focus of the field research was on diet and agriculture as the lived experiences of the research subjects, and only in the analysis were quantities of foodstuffs converted into nutrients for the ultimate use of academics and planners back in England (Richards 1939). At the time this anthropological study was taking place, an Official Dispatch (British Government 1936, cited in Quinn 1994) was sent from the British Secretary of State for the Colonies to officers administering the governments of colonial dependencies, including Northern Rhodesia, ordering a review of the nutrition of the ‘indigenous peoples of the British Empire’; the Prime Minister of Britain was reported as having *“under consideration the question whether there are any steps which might be taken ... to promote the application in*

the Colonial Empire of modern knowledge of nutrition"²⁷. As Victoria Quinn (1994) recounts, the 1936 Dispatch reflected a high level of interest in improving nutrition as a means of improving national development in the colonies: "*Expenditure on improved nutrition may well be remunerative itself, leading as it should to a greater well-being, greater efficiency in production and less waste of human life and effort*" (British Government 1936, paragraph 8). Subsequent to the Dispatch, information sent back to the Colonial Office generated the 1938 report *Nutrition in the Colonial Empire*, which among other conclusions "*considers that the two main causes of malnutrition in the Colonial Empire, apart from the prevalence of diseases, which often have a weakening effect, are, first and most important, the low standard of living, and, secondly, ignorance coupled with prejudice ... The problem is thus largely one of economic development*" (BMJ editorial 1939, pp.295). The concept of nutrition as we know it today was therefore first brought to Zambia by its former rulers as a new way to describe the age-old issues of hunger and disease, with improved nutrition framed as an input into national productivity and economic development in the colonies.

5.2 Following the pack: evolution of Zambian nutrition policy focus

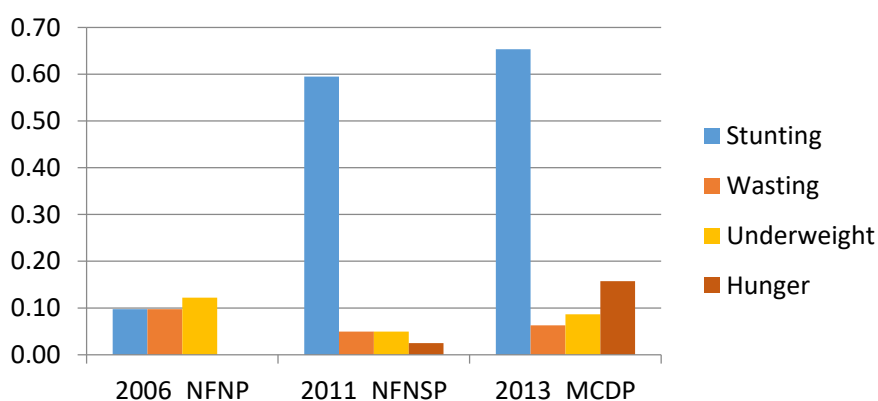
Nutrition programmes have existed in Zambia for decades, largely within the health sector. Written national nutrition policy underpinning programmes however has only emerged through the early part of the 21st century. After several decades of programme implementation, the NFNC's first five-year Strategic Plan 2005–10 (Zambia Ministry of Health 2011) aimed to bring nutrition to the foreground with a mandate for training, monitoring, and research. Although several nutrition-related policies and strategies were passed during the period of the strategic plan, the Commission did not achieve the required political attention or funding to nutrition; the next national Five-Year Development Plan moved further towards food security rather than child malnutrition, and it was not until the government's alignment with the international nutrition community's focus on stunting through SUN in 2011 that nutrition came back into national focus (Taylor 2012).

Between 2006 and 2011 the focus of nutrition policy and programmes in Zambia crystalized on current narratives of stunting as the problem. Focussed on a renewed narrative of stunting reduction as a driver of national productivity and growth, international investments

²⁷ The Straits Times, 13 November 1936, Page 11, available from: <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19361113-1.2.53.aspx>

in nutrition shifted; national conversations about nutrition followed suit; and in Zambia, national policies were tailored to this new post-MDG landscape. Zambia's policy focus therefore also changed since 2008, with a marked domination of stunting as a concept, over wasting and underweight, in the plans and guidelines issued after that year. Stunting is prioritized in the nutrition strategic plan because of the high negative impact of stunting in children under two years of age on a child's health, social and cognitive development and the subsequent loss of economic productivity and tendencies toward poorer health throughout their lifetime, and because there is now agreement that the problem is solvable at an acceptable cost (Ministry of Health [Zambia] 2011). Content analysis of the major nutrition policy and programme documents in Zambia (Figure 5.1) shows a marked change in major nutrition focus between the 2006 policy and the 2011 strategic plan, maintained in the 2013 programme document, with stunting suddenly outstripping other nutrition issues.

Figure 5.1: Changing national nutrition policy focus over time



Mentions of four major nutrition outcome measures in Zambian nutrition policy over time.
Calculation: Word count divided by number of pages.

While Zambia appears to have avoided the largely technocratic 'multi-sectoral planning' era in the 1970s which was trialled in several African countries in that decade (Garrett, Bassett et al. 2011), including in its nearest neighbour Malawi (Quinn 1994), under the newer stunting focus multi-sectoral coordination has re-emerged in recent years. Where top-down planning models were largely discredited in the 1970s (Field 1987), in recent years the need for input from multiple sectors has been re-branded 'nutrition-sensitive' action, meaning that policy and programmes in several sectors need to be sensitive to nutrition

considerations if malnutrition rates are to be reduced. In particular, nutrition-sensitive action in the food and agriculture sector would entail attention to producing quality diets, not just quantity of calories or farmer incomes (Ruel, Alderman et al. 2013). Thus the focus on stunting reduction in Zambia goes hand-in-hand with a narrative on the need for sectors outside of health to be sensitive to the requirements of nutrition policy, and for multi-sectoral action. This comes through clearly in written nutrition policy, where roles are assigned to several other sectors in nutrition policy documents from the health sector. Policy in other sectors is slower to incorporate nutrition considerations, however; while policy among operational sectors is starting to incorporate nutrition language and becoming more coherent around normative nutrition actions in Zambia (Harris, Drimie et al. 2017), implementation plans for instance in the agriculture sector tend to side-line any nutrition focus there might have been in written policy (Mwanamwenge and Harris 2017).

While the NFNC and its parent Ministry of Health are the formal creators of nutrition policy in Zambia, there is an acknowledged role of the international community in shaping what emerged in 2006 as the NFNP, and ultimately in 2013 as the MCDP. There was a sense in many national respondents' narratives of being buffeted by the international agenda of the time, and the subsequent funding and support for certain issues: *"One of the difficulties I think that I sometimes see in the way we approach things is that it's almost like -- maybe that's how life is, it's like fashion right?"*. I show below that what occurred between 2006 and 2011, when the major shift in Zambian policy focus happened, was largely as a result of an international shift in ideas and funding that Zambia then followed in its nutrition policy due to the pressures of changing international norms and funding flows, as it has done with multiple other nutrition programmes over several decades.

5.3 External influence: norm promotion for nutrition

In modern times, nutrition is an arm of international development that is gaining in visibility and attracting increasing funding. In 2006, the World Bank had published a comprehensive report on why and how nutrition should be brought to the fore of development after many years in the backwaters (World Bank 2006), citing the alarming scope of the problem, the failure of markets to address the problem, and strong development returns on investment as key reasons to reposition nutrition as central to development. One year later, a report from the Institute of Development Studies in the UK found that two key donors- DFID and the EC- were not bringing their full potential weight to bear in support of

international nutrition, with no identifiable nutrition strategy, low levels of funding, no internal nutrition champion and no measure of the impact of their work on nutrition (Sumner, Lindstrom et al. 2007). By 2010, after the 2008 nutrition watershed and *Lancet* undernutrition publication, DFID had a comprehensive international nutrition strategy, and at the time of writing significant overarching nutrition strategies are in place for many of the major development donors working on nutrition in Zambia, as well as country-specific strategies that often (but not always) mention nutrition (Table 5.1) although many of these strategy documents are difficult to obtain in practice.

Table 5.1: Key donor nutrition policy documents

Donor Agency	International strategy	Year	Zambia strategy	Year
DFID	Nutrition strategy	2010	Operational plan *	2011
Irish Aid	Africa strategy	2011	Country strategy	2013
SIDA	International development strategy	2014	Results strategy	2013
USAID	Multi-sectoral nutrition strategy	2014	Cooperation strategy	2011
World Bank	Health and nutrition strategy	2007	Partnership strategy	2013

* Updated 2014

An assessment of these strategy documents shows an interesting trend over time: In the single document available from before 2008 (the 2007 World Bank international health and nutrition strategy), underweight is the key nutrition indicator mentioned throughout the document, in line with the core international aims of the time, particularly the Millennium Development Goals. Documents since 2008 confirm a switch to the primacy of stunting as the major outcome of interest in every document in which nutrition is specifically mentioned and which was accessible. Irish Aid and SIDA, two of the key donors to the Zambian SUN Fund, do not have a nutrition strategy and do not mention nutrition or stunting in their international development strategies at all; and DFID and SIDA don't mention nutrition in their Zambia strategies, despite being core SUN Fund donors. However, where nutrition is mentioned, stunting is the dominant form of undernutrition addressed in all strategies after 2008.

Overwhelmingly in this research, national respondents identified the international community as creating the original awareness, attention and priority for nutrition policy and action in recent decades. Respondents identified the first International Conference on Nutrition (ICN1) hosted by the UN in 1992 as the original encouragement for individual

countries, including Zambia, to have a nutrition policy; a large technical and funding push from UNICEF in-country for nutrition subsequent to that; the USAID-funded Basic Support for Institutionalizing Child Survival (BASICS) project integrating nutrition into national child survival projects in the early 2000's; and international support for supplementation campaigns for decades as vital in keeping aspects of nutrition on the Zambian agenda and in programmes. Notably, all of these interventions were within the health sector, where nutrition policy is created and nutrition programmes are implemented.

More recently, every respondent that mentioned increasing priority of nutrition through international routes attributed it at least in part to the SUN movement. SUN was a pervasive theme across interviews at all levels, with the relatively young movement credited with bringing information and guidance through meetings and briefings; bringing coordination to funding mechanisms through the SUN Fund; and catalysing the new attention to collaboration between those working on nutrition in different sections of government at different levels through working groups and broader participation at meetings. When talking about SUN, respondents used 'SUN' as a shorthand for multiple different things, including the SUN Fund and subsequent increases in volume or coherence of funding; links to the international SUN groups and meetings, which provide a community for sharing practices and challenges; SUN's influential national civil society advocacy group, CSOSUN; and the broad cluster of sometimes novel actors and organizations who have come together in recent years to work on aspects of nutrition. SUN is many things to many people. However they framed SUN, respondents working in Zambia were clear that the advent of SUN has transformed the way people see the nutrition landscape through these mechanisms, and Zambia's joining of SUN was in turn attributed to the role of the international community, as noted by one respondent: *"I think DFID together with all the like-minded donors starting by Irish Aid, really started to, I guess, apply the principles of the SUN movement to Zambia"*.

It is therefore necessary to understand the role of the international community in bringing different interpretations of nutrition to Zambian nutrition policy and practice over time, in order to understand how Zambian nutrition policy has changed with changing international agendas. In this research, the international agenda-setting interventions mentioned most by respondents were direct advocacy for the issue of nutrition and its possible solutions; the provision of technical assistance in the construction of policy; and the role of international evidence in framing nutrition and promoting norms through certain forms

of knowledge. Below, the three major strategies of the international nutrition community in transferring the stunting agenda to Zambia are explored.

5.3.1 Advocacy

The visible face of agenda setting is advocacy, as a form of strategic communication distinct from behaviour change communication addressing knowledge and practices of different audiences, and from social mobilization (Pelletier, Haider et al. 2013). As a practice, advocacy is described as *'an activity conducted on the basis of experience and tacit knowledge... as opposed to a more codified, evidence-based and prescriptive approach... because advocacy represents an intervention into complex, dynamic and highly contextual socio-political systems, in which the strategies and tactics must be adjusted on a continual basis in light of rapidly changing conditions, reactions from actors, and feedback'* (Pelletier, Haider et al. 2013, pp.85). The advocacy of the international community was repeatedly identified by respondents as having played a large part in starting to bring a focus on nutrition in Zambia. Historically, several respondents mentioned the role of the Profiles advocacy software package, use of which was funded in Zambia for several years through USAID's BASICS and Linkages nutrition and IYCF programs. Profiles used national prevalence data to estimate the consequences of malnutrition and the cost-effectiveness of proposed solutions, and facilitate presentation of results to different audiences (Burkhalter, Abel et al. 1999). However, Profiles fell out of use with the end of the funded programme and lack of uptake by the government, and while awareness was raised among the nutrition community, sustained attention to and funding of nutrition in broader government was not achieved as attention of the health community in the country had largely turned to the drive to combat HIV and AIDS.

For nutrition, the predominant national civil society organization in Zambia in recent years has emerged as the Scaling up Nutrition Civil Society Organization (CSOSUN), a national advocacy NGO created through a collaboration between key international SUN organizations (SUN Fund donors DFID, SIDA and Irish Aid, and the NGOs Care and Concern) with the NFNC; funded through the SUN Fund; and until recently led by charismatic nutrition champion William Chilufya. CSOSUN's strategy started with the production of 'ten key asks' for nutrition, a document laying out ten broad actions that need to happen if nutrition is to be prioritized in Zambia, from increasing political will and increasing funding for nutrition, to providing public data and engaging civil society. These were drafted by international partners and disseminated through CSOSUN to key national policy actors. CSOSUN have subsequently taken advantage of

political windows that have opened up to get their nutrition messages across: When an interim government was appointed on the most recent death of a sitting President, CSOSUN requested international partners to draft a set of 'quick wins' that the government could address in its 12-18 month term before the resumption of elections, including the freeing up of resources for existing budget lines, more visibility for nutrition through high-level speeches, and minor adaptations to existing policy and legislation to make it more nutrition-friendly (though few of these were followed up). Most recently, drawing on international actors with knowledge of similar campaigns in Peru, CSOSUN led a campaign to have nutrition recognized as an election issue in the 2016 general elections, with all major parties pledging specific nutrition actions if elected.

CSOSUN has both feet very firmly in the Zambian political context, and has emerged as an active and connected advocacy organization, with regular media exposure; a convening and supporting role (including channelling of international funds) for dedicated nutrition parliamentary groups and community based organisations (CBOs); strategic links to national and international NGOs and researchers; and a strong relationship with most organizations active in child undernutrition in Zambia. As one nutrition partner put it in a 2015 meeting: *"CSOSUN are seen as owners of nutrition issues in the country"*, and it has often been CSOSUN rather than NFNC that has been invited to address parliament on nutrition issues, despite the advocacy organisation's dearth of technical nutrition knowledge. Particularly through the strategic manoeuvrings of its first coordinator, Chilufya, CSOSUN has been both active and trusted. It is important to note however that the genesis and funding of CSOSUN is distinctly international: even its name incorporates the SUN movement through which CSOSUN was born; the organization draws heavily upon the occasional goodwill of external international experts for its technical expertise; and therefore in the documents it has produced the international focus on stunting predominates.

Other groups, such as international NGOs, also advocate on specific issues, often in conjunction with CSOSUN. Advocacy is however currently directed almost exclusively to national-level policy makers in the form of raising awareness and lobbying for funds; in fact, when exploring the term 'advocacy' or 'lobbying' with many national respondents, it was lobbying for their organizational interests and funding which was the most common use of the terms, as well as to some extent providing information to national elites and middle classes through newspapers and radio interviews. While rural communities receive nutrition

education and information through several government and NGO programs, there is less focus on enabling citizens - particularly poor rural citizens - to have a voice, and to participate in civil society or to raise demand for good nutrition and related rights and services at grassroots level. Advocacy for nutrition improvement remains predominantly an activity taking place at the national level between national level actors in Zambia, with limited scope currently for community-based advocacy efforts. It has been suggested that Zambian nutrition advocates could learn from HIV advocacy in the country in the 2000s, whereby sufferers mobilized behind their right to treatment; however there are differences with nutrition, whereby malnutrition framed as stunting affects predominantly children, who are politically weak (Results UK and CITAM+ 2014).

Overall, the 'what to do' advocacy message has largely been supplied by the international community, using advocacy as one route to set a stunting agenda and formulate health-sector nutrition policy largely based on the technical and managerial solutions outlined in chapter 1. International organizations invested in these narratives are now relying on countries to work with them in order to understand 'how to do it', which necessarily requires some understanding of the practical and political contexts into which these ideas have been inserted. In other sectors – notably the related disciplines of global health and international development – work has more critically engaged with the consequences of this transmission of ideas than has so far been the case with international nutrition (Brock, Cornwall et al. 2001, Hassel 2014, Shiffman, Schmitz et al. 2016); as discussed in chapter 1, the ways an issue is framed by the broad church of international researchers, funders and practitioners may have important and unforeseen consequences for what might be done at national level in terms of policy and programmes, limiting action to the technical realm and ignoring the political, and how this might play out for affected communities. A key challenge for policy advocacy is the positioning of issues that are often not considered to be immediately pressing for political or electoral gains. Indeed, public policy researchers have previously highlighted differences between 'pressing' and 'chosen' problems in the policy process (Hirschman 1975, Grindle and Thomas 1989). Nutrition, particularly in its chronic form as stunting, is generally thought of as a chosen issue, in that it is not immediately visible (particularly when a large proportion of the population is stunted (Haddad 2012)), and therefore not pressing politically to address (Garrett and Natalicchio 2011). This challenge of positioning nutrition emerged in several ways in nutrition in Zambia; specifically, the issue of stunting was commonly seen by respondents in

this research as not politically urgent, with the international community – rather than the government or citizens – generally leading advocacy and action.

5.3.2 Technical assistance

Some respondents in this research (though fewer) did not highlight the role of SUN or international actors, but framed country-level actors or organizations as leaders of change, as *“knowing what the country needs”*, as *“not starting from zero”*. These respondents tended to frame international contributions as technical assistance to an enabled national nutrition community, rather than as setting the agenda. Technical assistance often aims at increasing the capacity and ability of national actors to undertake nutrition actions; capacity of those working in nutrition at various levels in low- and middle-income countries to implement recommended nutrition programmes has been assessed as low (Bryce, Coitinho et al. 2008), and there have been calls to improve both technical capacity (Shrimpton, Hughes et al. 2014) and strategic capacity (Pelletier, Menon et al. 2011) since. The capacity of the Zambian national nutrition community has repeatedly been found in assessments to be low in technical knowledge, programme planning and policy formulation, largely due to historical lack of training and educational opportunities in nutrition nationally, particularly at higher levels.

As well as building the abilities of national actors along technical lines however, technical assistance can also replace the work of national actors without building their own capacity, as a direct intervention into the national policy space. A particular stand-out position in this work, notable because it differed from other framings, was a respondent from the World Bank who described various reports that were written by Bank consultants but that *“will come out as an NFNC document”*. This illustrates most clearly the international influence on practice and policy that comes through technical assistance, and the framing of policy documents and ideas as national when in fact they are largely coming from international experts. In Zambia, international involvement with policy agenda setting and formulation was noted particularly with UNICEF assistance and donor input in writing the original 2006 nutrition policy: *“[The NFNP] was very consultative in that every partner put in what they felt would be their role, with the guidance of the NFNC of course, and a lot of -- along the way with a lot of international support at one point or another during the development of the document”*. Then later the same was true in narrowing the frame of the subsequent strategic plan (2011 NFNSP) into what became the major nutrition programme (2013 MCDP), focussing on just the part of the original policy and strategy documents that dealt with stunting:

“Basically [the NFNSP] was very ambitious, although it was saying the right things, you know it was I think a wish-list to be honest ... especially DFID and Irish Aid thought that taking a more pragmatic approach given the low level we were starting from. We started to focus more on the 1000 days and on trying to focus on, I think it was pillar 1 of the broad strategy, addressing stunting and developing a programme around that pillar”. This process of international involvement in drafting and decisions on Zambian nutrition policy has also been documented in published literature: *“Recognising significant financial and human resource gaps in the sector, and that the NFNSP is an ambitious plan given the very high stunting levels, donors and government decided to start by focusing efforts on the first 1,000 days. As with the NFNSP, donors provided technical and financial support”* (Seco, Sadlier et al. 2014, pp.79).

Thus in at least three documented cases (national policies and programmes, and the World Bank reports), documents created by or strongly influenced by the international community through technical assistance were branded as national outputs. In the case of the World Bank reports however, written and submitted between 2013 and 2015, these have still not emerged from NFNC. This is usually interpreted as ‘low capacity’ or the slow working pace of government; but it could equally be interpreted as NFNC’s only way of resisting what has been written in their name. Why would they resist putting out these anticipated technical documents? One national respondent with a long involvement in the Zambian nutrition policy world suggested that the NFNC were resistant to change at an organizational level: *“it’s because they are in the comfort zone – you know, it’s just fear of changing, stepping into the zone which you’re not used to operating”.* It is known that the new NFNC Executive Director from 2014 faced challenges in changing the course of the organisation to align with SUN’s assignment of NFNC as strategic coordinators of nutrition in Zambia, from NFNC staff who saw their role as discrete project implementation rather than strategic coordination. Several respondents mentioned Zambia’s overall approach to the recent change in focus towards stunting as responsive rather than resistant, but managers of key national institutions in the direct line of the international community’s new vision for nutrition are treading a fine line between protecting staff from rapid change, and pushing a new policy focus that – while it might be a positive step – has largely been imposed from outside.

5.3.3 Evidence and understanding and knowledge

Evidence was a theme in interviews at all levels with respondents citing the role of key research in shaping what makes it into policy, in particular widely-promoted academic

nutrition papers, and the availability and interpretation of nutrition data in the country. The key piece of evidence mentioned by respondents was the *Lancet* 2008 undernutrition series, cited by many as an important advocacy and learning tool for the Zambian nutrition community; some respondents reported having read the papers, and others having heard about them, but it was evident that the series had not only brought new international evidence to light, but had framed messages in ways that struck respondents. These messages – consolidated into fewer and clearer messages than previously around stunting, the 1000 days, and inter-sectoral actions, as well as the few key interventions promoted by the *Lancet* series – were reported to be more easily assimilated by policy actors than the previously more diverse messages on potential actions for nutrition, and the international community was credited with bringing this new information. The role of conferences and international meetings in disseminating this streamlined information was also highlighted by those more senior in the Zambian nutrition policy community, to which Zambian delegations had been invited more frequently since the ramping up of nutrition internationally and the increased availability of donor funds at national level to pay for attendance. This financial support for conference attendance, while recognised as important, was subsequently bemoaned by donors: *‘Whilst vital in earlier stages, the proliferation of global nutrition and SUN related meetings in 2013 has paradoxically caused this support to become somewhat problematic. It has led to the expectation that donors should be relied upon to fund participation at these events and it means that key policy makers and programme implementers spend significant amounts of time attending international meetings’* (Seco, Sadlier et al. 2014, pp.79).

Further to the *Lancet* papers and international evidence more broadly, many responses cited a renewed awareness of the headline stunting statistics in Zambia as integral to personal and organizational understanding of the urgency of the undernutrition issue. The high stunting numbers (45 percent in the 2007 DHS survey and 40 percent since the 2014 survey) have played a central role in advocacy efforts in the country. Most often in interviews outside of the immediate nutrition policy community, these numbers were framed as a revelation, that people hadn’t previously been aware of the high stunting rates, nor of their significance for child health, cognitive development, and national development. Again, the international momentum for nutrition was credited with highlighting the situation, as emphasised by one national respondent: *“let me just to mention that this has been made possible by this move that has come to say nutrition is important, because for 50 years we failed to address malnutrition - and that is the basis for these reforms”*.

A final way that knowledge is brought to Zambia is through education. Training and teaching is an integral part of many of the capacity-building initiatives embedded in nutrition projects, from refresher courses for community health workers to one-day workshops for nutrition managers to residential courses for technical ministry staff. Further to discrete trainings, the international community has since 2012 been supporting a new nutrition undergraduate degree at the University of Zambia in Lusaka, with masters-degree level teaching volunteers recruited through an international health education charity, and the course and tuition funded for students by the SUN Fund. The first students graduated in 2015, mostly going back to government jobs which had seconded them to the degree course, and a new MSc began in 2016. Prior to the BSc, the highest qualification in nutrition available in Zambia was a diploma in food science and technology, so for many years the highest nutritionists in the country were either trained to this level or went abroad for further education. Through each of these three routes – training programmes, the new higher-level education opportunities, and international education – international nutrition knowledge and norms are transferred to those working on nutrition policy from a national perspective.

5.4 Contributing to change: local coordination for nutrition

National policies must ultimately be taken to local level implementation if ideas are to have any impact. Zambia has seen implementation of several nutrition interventions under the health sector at district level over the past fifteen years, including management of severe acute malnutrition at health centres and in the community; child health weeks involving vitamin A supplementation drives; and growth monitoring and promotion at health clinics to check for child wasting. In addition, nutrition groups at community level were set up and registered under an amendment made in 1975 to the NFNC Act. A nutrition group is defined as a voluntary, non-profit-making organization concerned with combatting malnutrition; in practice, these were intended to be the structure closest to communities for NFNC, that could be called on to help with frontline work (e.g. for vitamin A campaigns) and were intended to allow for implementation at district level that was not possible before their constitution due to lack of frontline health staff. However, many of these groups have stopped functioning, and as of 2014 NFNC had very little engagement with any surviving groups. Coverage of nutrition interventions is therefore variable, with the most successful interventions in terms of coverage delivered during the semi-annual child health weeks (Fiedler, Mubanga et al. 2013). These disparate programme elements have been brought together under the main national nutrition

programme, the MCDP, and Zambia has now started implementation in 14 pilot districts: The MCDP combines existing programs and new ones into a more holistic framework, and a district focus is intended to regain the connection to the local that had been lost with the mothballing of community nutrition groups.

A key focus of international nutrition practice over time has been the coordination of different sectors to cover the various determinants of nutrition. This is also the major premise of the MCDP, that different sectors should work together to cover the different determinants of nutrition. However, little is understood either internationally or locally about the process of coordination for nutrition (Harris and Drimie 2012), nor is there evidence on impacts; coordination for nutrition remains a theory based on the beliefs of key actors in the international nutrition world, yet is being rolled out in countries where learning is gradually being generated. To understand how better to implement cross-sectoral action on the ground, in 2011 the international NGO Concern Worldwide initiated a project in Mumbwa district, Central province, which aimed to foster closer links and improved inter-sectoral working between ministries and other development actors for nutrition under the auspices of the Realigning Agriculture to Improve Nutrition (RAIN) project, and to generate lessons for how to introduce and scale up inter-sectoral action to other districts. Alongside its own project providing health and agriculture interventions to women's groups to improve stunting, Concern Worldwide engaged a consultant to work with local actors to start to build a framework for inter-ministerial coordination that could take over the different elements of the RAIN project once the initial project had shown results. The consultant had skills in building networks and generating consensus, within which different ways could be explored to promote coordination between technical and managerial officials in nutrition-related ministries at district level. The outcomes of this engagement, learning captured regularly over the five years of implementation, fed into the process of determining how to take the MCDP to local level. Largely as a result of this process, the rollout of the MCDP in 14 pilot districts is through multi-sectoral district plans; rollout is primarily funded by the SUN fund, which channels funds through the budgets of five operational ministries charged with different aspects of nutrition²⁸, to implement their portions of the multi-sectoral plans.

²⁸ Ministries of health, agriculture, community development, education, and local government, those ministries which signed up for the MCDP programme at national level

The strategy articulated by nutrition stakeholders in the district under the facilitated Concern project²⁹ called for the constitution of a coordinating committee to bring sectors together in dialogue and eventually action. The coordination committee was first convened in early 2011, with representation from key line ministries and local NGOS, and with convening and secretariat functions performed by Concern Worldwide. During negotiations, it emerged that three ministries – Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL); Ministry of Health (MoH); and the newly-formed Ministry of Community Development and Maternal and Child Health (MCDMCH³⁰) – had a large stake in community nutrition, so the committee that was eventually established (the Mumbwa District Nutrition Coordinating Committee, DNCC) was led by officials from those ministries, and other organizations formed an ‘outer ring’ of interested stakeholders. This committee was later officially constituted under the District Council’s District Development Coordination Committee (DDCC) to give it formal reporting links to provincial and national institutions. In addition at this early stage, it was envisaged that there would be direct links with national level through the NFNC and through the facilitation of Concern Worldwide; and it was understood that reach into communities would eventually require sub-committees at ward level (WNCC). The goal of the DNCC, as articulated by the DNCC itself after a facilitated process of reflection in its first year of operation, is *coordination of nutrition activities in Mumbwa, to contribute to reduced malnutrition in the district*. The purpose of the DNCC since 2011 has therefore been to establish and facilitate district-level institutional arrangements to help align and coordinate activities of different actors in Mumbwa to effectively address the intertwined causes of malnutrition.

Multiple different organizations were therefore potentially involved in nutrition in Mumbwa district, and Concern wanted to track whether there were any changes in coordination over the duration of their project. Social network mapping exercises were therefore undertaken in 2011 and 2015 in the district (Figure 5.2), to work through questions of who is involved in the issue of nutrition programme implementation in Mumbwa; how much influence different actors have over the issue of nutrition; and – to understand coordination for nutrition in the district – who is working with whom. As described in more detail in chapter 2, representatives of several ministries and NGOs were interviewed, and the

²⁹ In various workshops and meetings in Mumbwa and Lusaka over the latter half of 2011

³⁰ Ministry constituted after the November 2011 elections and mandated with taking over community public health from the MoH, changed again in 2015 to become just Ministry of Community Development again

NetMap method used in asking this group these three questions in turn, creating a physical map showing the links between actors. The map was then transferred to a matrix in Excel software and loaded into the Vizualyzer social network analysis software for interpretation. Actors involved were added if they were mentioned by at least one respondent; links of coordination were added according to the number of respondents mentioning the link ('weight' in the NetMaps below); attribution of influence was added as an average of the influence attributed by different respondents; and the circles around the actors show how central they are to the issue of nutrition. The resulting network map reflects the consensus views of key respondents from a range of organizations involved in nutrition issues at the district level.

These two network maps, in 2011 and 2015, show the main nutrition actors at district level in each sector, and how they are linked through 'coordination', as perceived by local actors. The maps capture visually the changes reported by respondents: In 2011, MAL was considered the major ministry working for nutrition in Mumbwa, appearing at the centre of the nutrition network at district levels. Interviews in 2011 showed that nutrition in the district was largely equated with hunger, and thus largely with maize production, hence the primacy of MAL in the minds of respondents when asked about nutrition. MOH and MCDMCH were considered separate but less influential actors in nutrition programme implementation, and interaction was reported not to be consistent or regular among the ministries and other partners on nutrition issues. Interview respondents reported that while ministry staff and partners generally had a positive outlook on the need for coordination between agriculture and health on nutrition issues, most were not really sure what the other sectors were doing. What it meant to be 'working for nutrition' was not well articulated, except for a clear focus on the community who were assigned high influence over their own nutrition by respondents; several respondents mentioned a version of the mantra *"everybody is working for the same individuals, just some call them farmers and some call them patients"*.

In 2015, the network map at district level is significantly changed: The map shape itself is considered a much stronger network, with cross collaboration bilaterally between organizations as well as spokes going outwards from the centre. The DNCC was now considered the hub, with the agriculture sector less central to nutrition programme implementation in 2015; through facilitation under Concern Worldwide, the stunting narrative with its multi-sectoral focus has become dominant within the district, backed by the new

MCDP and the multi-sectoral district plans, and now the understanding of nutrition does not equate in respondents' minds only with food security. Other ministries are stepping into nutrition roles, largely attributed to the facilitation process, stronger links to nutrition partners at national level, and increased funding through SUN.

Success in inter-sectoral initiatives has been defined as the ability of a partnership “to emerge, to maintain itself over time, and to realize activities related to its goal” (O'Neill, Lemieux et al. 1997). By this measure, coordination for nutrition in Mumbwa has been a success: From previously ad-hoc action and sporadic communication on nutrition issues between ministries, the DNCC has now been constituted; has met regularly since; and has undertaken activities related to the goal it defined for itself under the auspices of the Concern project. Mumbwa is an exceptional case however: While the administrative structures and staffing levels are not different to other districts, the level of engagement of an international NGO in the form of Concern Worldwide is notably different from other districts. Coordination did not happen spontaneously; ‘business as usual’ cycles and siloed working models had to be purposefully altered by an outside impetus provided by the NGO. Overall, the presence of joint resources from SUN, joint planning at the DNCC, and recognition from national level, have made Mumbwa a poster child for inter-sectoral coordination in practice, and the DNCC has subsequently provided a model for other districts piloting the MCDP, and lessons for national level on how to duplicate the process (Drimie, Kumar Chakrabarty et al. 2014).

Figure 5.2: Changes in local collaboration for nutrition; 2011 and 2015 NetMaps

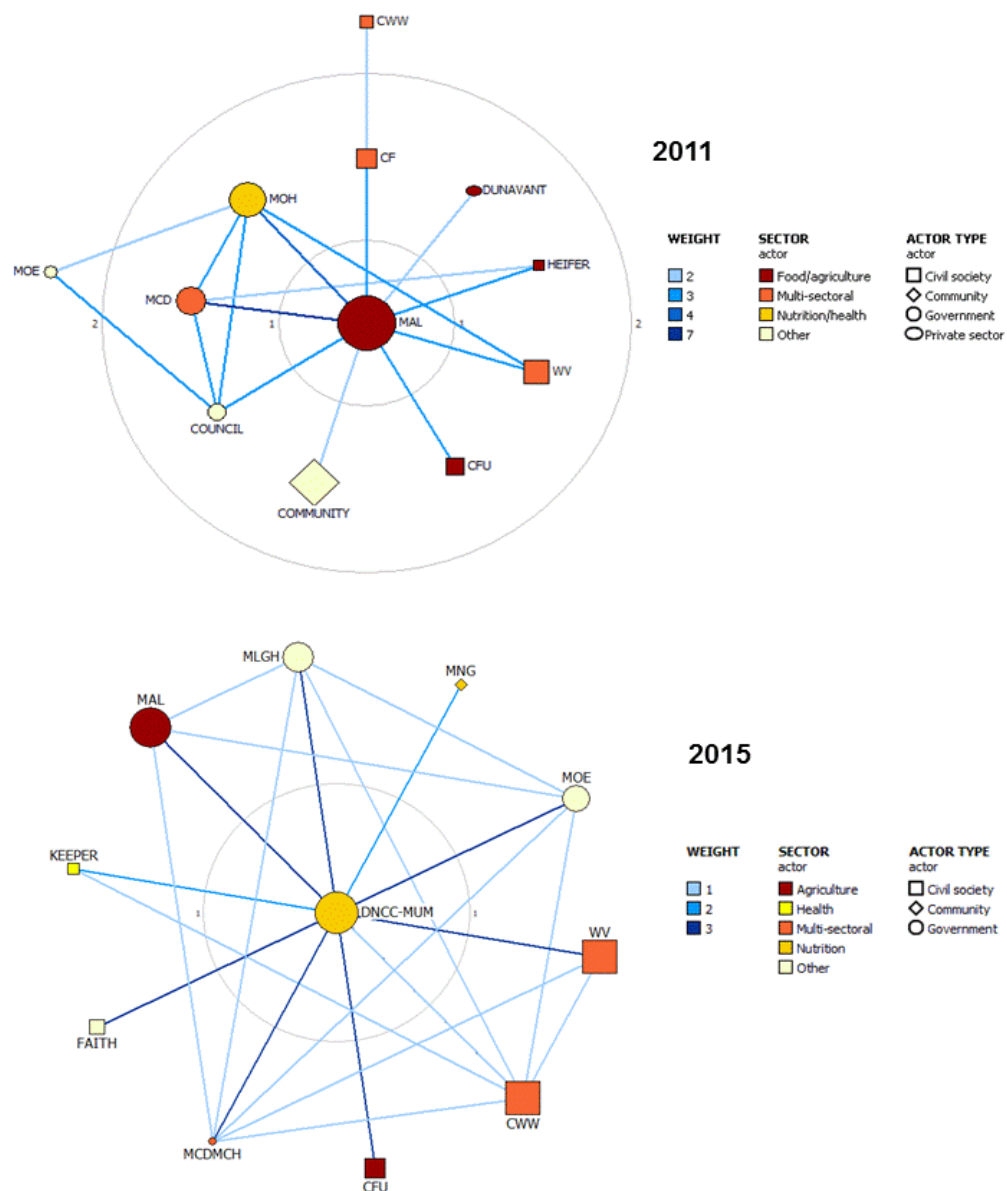


Table 5.2 Full list of entities mentioned in local NetMaps

CF	Child Fund	Keeper	Keeper Zambia
CFU	Conservation Farming Unit	MAL	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
Community		MCD	Ministry of Community Development
Council		MCDMCH	Ministry of Community Development Mother and Child Health
CWW	Concern Worldwide	MLGH	Ministry of Local Government and Housing
DNCC	District Nutrition Coordination Committee	MOE	Ministry of Education
Dunavant	Dunavant Cotton	MOH	Ministry of Health
Faith	Faith and church groups	MNG	Mumbwa Nutrition Group
Heifer	Heifer International	WV	World Vision

At the same time as the DNCC was being facilitated, the main RAIN project was being implemented by Concern and local NGO partners, and evaluated as a three-arm quasi-randomized controlled field trial by an external evaluator (IFPRI). The project targeted children from conception to 23 months of age, roughly equivalent to the first 1,000 days of life, through integrated agriculture, nutrition and health interventions provided to their mothers. Most programme elements were delivered through local women's groups created by the programme, led by a female farmer nominated by her group to receive agricultural training and inputs and pass these on to the group during monthly meetings. The project comprised of a home gardening intervention to increase year round availability of, and access to, nutrient rich foods at the household level; in one evaluation arm, this was accompanied by promotion of health, nutrition, and care seeking behaviour by existing community health workers who received additional training in nutrition topics to pass on to the group; and in the control arm households continued to receive normal government health and agriculture services. Thus the RAIN project was an embodiment of multi-sectoral action linking the health and agriculture sectors in practice. In the final evaluation (Harris, Quabili et al. 2016), while some project elements worked well (in particular the production of vegetables for household consumption), most outcomes were not achieved even with this gold-standard programme, and stunting in fact was worse in the intervention group than the control arm at endline. This is in line with previous findings of multi-sectoral agriculture-nutrition projects (Masset, Haddad et al. 2011), where impacts on stunting are yet to be seen. Thus there is still little empirical evidence of multi-sectoral programmes impacting stunting, even though the theoretical basis remains logically intact and continues as the dominant international nutrition narrative, and to serve purposes of bringing non-traditional development actors on board with nutrition. The failure of this high-profile programme in Zambia did not change the focus on multi-sectoral approaches to stunting reduction in international or Zambian nutrition policy agendas, and the DNCC process in Mumbwa and the multi-sectoral approach to stunting reduction continues in Zambia.

5.5 *Policy transfer: learning from another place and time*

Every country has policy problems, issues that demand amelioration for a population. While these problems are in some sense unique in terms of the specific history and actors that gave rise to them in a certain context, broad categories of issues and concerns are common across continents (Rose 1991). Malnutrition is one such problem, not confined to one country or a set of countries; in 2016, there is not a single nation that does not suffer from some form of malnutrition or another, by multiple measures, among sections of its population (IFPRI 2016), though the specific outcomes and aetiologies will vary. It is therefore natural that, given some dissatisfaction with the *status quo*, governments and other bodies will look to learn from what might improve these issues in other contexts, and seek to bring in ideas or actions to address a particular problem. Zambia has a problem with child stunting, among other nutrition issues, and this has been brought to light in the past ten years or so as nutrition actors in the country have publicised existing nutrition data beyond the nutrition community. This section interprets the findings from the chapter above in light of the theory of policy transfer, arguing that the international community present in Zambia have been instrumental in transferring the idea of multi-sectoral action for stunting reduction to the country's nutrition policy and practice, and discussing the implications of this.

Policy scholars noticing the tendency to learn from other places and times have examined it in various ways: As 'lesson drawing' (Rose 1991, Rose 1993), studied as a rational process of taking learning from somewhere else and seeking to apply it to a current issue; as 'policy diffusion' (Basu, Stuckler et al. 2013, Graham, Shipan et al. 2013), studied as a generally quantitative analysis of patterns in policy uptake which condition future adoption in other contexts, privileging the role of structure; and as 'policy transfer' (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996, Dolowitz and Marsh 2000), studied as a generally qualitative analysis tracing processes by which policies move from place to place, privileging the role of agency. Lesson drawing, policy diffusion and policy transfer are all studies of the taking up of learning about policies, administrative setups, institutions and ideas in one political setting, and their application in another (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000). A particular critique of the lesson-drawing research was its assumption of rational and voluntary processes and choices by policy makers (Benson and Jordan 2011), and later in the 1990s policy theory took a more critical turn in response to a perceived absence of issues such as politics and internationalization, and the rejection of linear and formulaic processes (Hulme 2005). In one direction went the policy diffusion literature,

emanating predominantly from the field of international relations and using large datasets to predict the pattern of policy flow (Marsh and Sharman 2009). In the other direction went the policy transfer literature (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996, Dolowitz and Marsh 2000), defined by (Stone 2004, pp.547) as “*the contested politics of who gets what policy*” – and beyond this, the underlying transfer of ideas, norms, behaviours and discourses – and therefore concerned with actors and the reasons for their actions. This work focusses on policy transfer.

To strengthen policy transfer research, there have been calls to broaden the scope of work looking at how policies move from place to place, away from just industrialized countries towards the different complexities of the developing world as a potent testing ground for these theories; to include more non-positivist interpretations of research, recognizing both structure and agency, and the relationship between them, as important; to combine the policy transfer framework with other streams of work on networks and governance, paying attention to the mechanisms of transfer (such as learning, competition or coercion) as well as the bureaucratic processes; to explore policy complexity in international agendas and communities, and the multi-level nature of policy from international to local; and to move to define and explain success or failure of the movement of policy, such as success in a programmatic sense (was the problem resolved?) or a political sense (did the policy benefit certain actors?), and success for whom (Hulme 2005, Marsh and Sharman 2009, Benson and Jordan 2011). A key feature of policy transfer is that policies can be shared between and within countries, and between international, national and local levels of governance, with entities being either borrowers or lenders of policies (or programmes). Hulme (2005) and Ngoasong (2010) also note different levels of policy transfer, or trans-scalar networks, from the rise in complexity of global policy communities and the rise of generic agendas at international level, to the transfer of policies across sectors or from previous governments at national level and down to local level, and the complexity of top down/bottom up transfer between levels.

In Dolowitz and Marsh’s policy transfer categorization (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000), transfer is not always full and complete: transfers may be uninformed (where a borrowing country has insufficient information on how a policy operated in the original context); incomplete (where crucial elements of a policy are not transferred); or inappropriate (where there is insufficient attention to contextual differences). Transfers may be cases of copying, emulation, combining or inspiring. In addition, each case of policy transfer falls on a continuum from voluntary to coercive in its origin, and from obligated to negotiated in its enactment.

Further, Turgeon, Gagnon et al. (2008) split elements to be transferred into hard elements (goal, content, instruments, institutions, legislation, regulations, programs), and soft elements (ideas, ideologies, principles, lessons, interpretations). Finally, several types of actors will be involved in transfer, from official (government, UN) to non-state (NGOs, think-tanks).

The *Lancet* undernutrition series in 2008 and subsequent international strategies have presented, formally and clearly, the latest in a series of evolving 'big ideas' in international nutrition, ways in which the international nutrition community has seen and shaped the research, policy and practice of the sector, and of countries with high burdens of malnutrition. National nutrition policy is affected by many things, and in countries with a strong donor and international NGO community a major factor is the way that nutrition is understood and addressed by the international nutrition community. It is found in this research that international discourse has influenced national nutrition policy and programme directions in Zambia significantly, and that international policy ideas have therefore been transferred to Zambia.

In Zambia, policy transfer can be said to be uninformed, however, in that nobody in the international or national communities knows that the stunting and multi-sectoral agenda will work for reducing malnutrition; there is no comprehensive evidence of effectiveness, and nutrition actors are working at the frontiers of knowledge, based primarily on theoretical belief in a particular logical policy model promoting current dominant development paradigms of stunting and multi-sectoral action. The model is increasingly informed by accumulating evidence (both positive, in the evidence of functioning bureaucratic models such as the DNCC, and negative, in the failure of the RAIN project), but in such a complex issue as malnutrition, with its multiple streams of solutions within and between different sectors, it is unlikely that full evidence (by any standard) can ever be comprehensively generated and marshalled. Thus national nutrition policy continues to be a case of emulation of international recommendations, transposed where politically feasible into country policy contexts. In studies of agenda setting, it has often been found to be ideas and principles that are transferred between policy contexts primarily, rather than entire policy instruments (Kingdon 1995, John 2013, Hill and Varone 2016); here it is the ideas of stunting and multi-sectorality that are moving around the world and have come to rest in Zambia. The SUN movement in particular is promoting these ideas, and when countries subsequently request support on how to implement them, the SUN secretariat suggests trialling different hard elements (largely goals

and administrative arrangements) in order that countries learn for themselves, because little evidence yet exists on what works in practice.

Much policy transfer research has been undertaken on more or less voluntary and informed transfer between 'developed' countries, particularly between the US and UK and among EU states, and this makes up the majority of policy transfer literature. But globalization has changed the nature of policy making for 'developing' countries also, and these countries have many features of political economy and social context different from their Northern cousins. A particular point of difference for low-income countries is their dependence on international aid for a proportion of national budgets and implementation of specific programs (Fraser 2007). The implication for the policy transfer literature is that donor organizations are key players in policy transfer in aid-dependent countries, with influence over which ideas make it into policy, adding a particular twist that is not present in richer countries (Common 1999, Minogue 2004, Bangura and Larbi 2006). Dolowitz and Marsh claimed that *"when aid agencies are making loans, it is likely to lead to coercive policy transfer"* (2000, pp.6); their 1996 book asserted that in turn, *"a political leader in a Third World country has little alternative but to accept the policies imposed by the World Bank or the IMF, given that the consequences of refusal are deepening debt and economic and, probably, political crisis"* (1996, pp.17).

The purely coercive transfer of policies to national policy agendas is rare (Stone 1999, Dolowitz and Marsh 2000); in most cases transfer, if imposed, will be conditional (often on accepting policy direction in return for finances) or in some sense obligated (for continuing membership of a desirable community) (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000, Holzinger and Knill 2005). In this case, the transfer of ideas to the Zambian national policy landscape was obligated and conditional, but also subtle: The Zambian nutrition community needs and wants to be a part of the broader international nutrition community in order to access funds, information, and support, and the stunting and multi-sectoral agenda is currently dominant in a strong epistemic community in the international nutrition system. Conditionalities on the donor funding of major nutrition strategies in Zambia were set in the name of pragmatism, when it was articulated by donors that the capacity did not exist to address all aspects of the 2006 nutrition policy, and it was decided that the first strategic direction of addressing stunting would be a funding priority (Seco, Sadler et al. 2014). Policy transfer in this case is therefore not so much a case of national resistance to policy pressure at a point in time, as international filling of a national policy void through the provision of knowledge, technical assistance and

funding over the long term. A study of health policy transfer to Malawi found similar issues in relation to the role of donors in agenda setting, though found that policy transfer in that case was highly coercive, as refusal to implement quite striking health sector reforms would have meant the stoppage of significant international aid to the health system (Tambulasi 2011). In the case of nutrition policy in Zambia, transfer is certainly not found to be so coercive as to threaten significant aid stoppages; this is more a case of carrot than stick, with significant resources available for certain nutrition programs, but no major existing funding to be pulled in retaliation for refusal. Nutrition, as a small sub-sector of health in some senses, is not the big financial deal that health sector reform is.

Ultimately, though the transfer of ideas and actions into Zambia's national policy may be obligated and conditional, there is very little contestation of the policy ideas as transferred. National actors are trained in many cases in the same international institutions, and so in many cases would not see a need to contest what they see as rational and proper attempts at improving policy and practice. Most actors engaged in nutrition in Zambia agree with the technical nutrition interventions proposed, and need resources to implement them; the Zambian nutrition community is not focussed on the broader political dimensions underlying all of the different manifestations of malnutrition – under and over – that are seen in Zambia today, such as growing inequality in income and access to food and healthcare, or the status of women. If anything, there is haggling over the particular makeup of the basket of technical interventions (undernutrition vs. overnutrition; stunting vs. wasting), with very few people looking to address the core underlying political issues that drive malnutrition.

5.6 Conclusion

Stunting and multi-sectoral action, the dominant ideas in the international nutrition community currently, are increasingly evident over time in written nutrition policy within the health sector in Zambia, largely displacing former framings of nutrition. Changes in the policy agenda to favour stunting as an outcome, and subsequently in written policy formulation, can be shown to result from changes to the international community's nutrition agenda, transferred to Zambian policy through the normative promotion of a specific type of evidence and ways of understanding the issue of malnutrition, largely propagated through advocacy and technical assistance and training. Efforts at implementing inter-sectoral ideas have been undertaken in one Zambian district, resulting in positive lessons on how ministries might work

together through existing bureaucratic systems at local level – though studies of discrete multi-sectoral programmes do not show promising results for stunting reduction in practice.

The transfer of nutrition policy to Zambia through the international nutrition system is found in this analysis to be largely uninformed, in that evidence of the effectiveness of the key idea of multi-sectorality on nutrition outcomes in different contexts is lacking. Further, transfer of these ideas is found to be obligated on continued funding; conditional on membership of the international nutrition community; and largely uncontested within the Zambian nutrition community itself due to a combination of belief in similar development models, and low capacity to determine alternate paths. The idea of stunting reduction is therefore now dominant within written nutrition policy in the health sector in Zambia, but the multi-sectoral framing of nutrition requires the action of other sectors, and actors outside of the traditional network for nutrition. The effect of this multi-sectoral requirement on the Zambian nutrition policy process is addressed in the chapter below.

6 National networks: defining the alternatives

*If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together.*

- African proverb.

It is shown above, in chapter 3, that international discourse around nutrition has evolved over time as ideas, agendas and actors have changed. Nutrition as an issue has been framed in certain ways within the international nutrition community, and the norms this has created – in terms of language used, knowledge produced, issues highlighted, and actions promoted – are likely to affect how nutrition is perceived and nutrition policy shaped in countries where the international community is active. One broad discourse – the stunting and multi-sectoral narrative – has been identified above as shaping international nutrition agendas, and chapter 5 has shown how these ideas have also influenced Zambian nutrition policy and practice over the past decade, particularly in the health sector. The focus on stunting and multi-sectoral action is an important narrative that has become dominant within nutrition circles internationally and nationally, but the nutrition community has made itself so broad in embracing multi-sectoral action that to enact its ideas, it must reach out far beyond its usual constituency, and in particular to the agriculture sector as the sector shaping the availability and accessibility of food. Entities working on nutrition-relevant issues, from food to health and beyond, do not speak with one voice on nutrition issues; rather each comprises many different beliefs and interests, each seeking to advance its own agenda even as it may also subscribe to a broader humanitarian goal such as malnutrition reduction, with impacts on the nutrition policy process.

The political and policy realm in any country is large, comprising a multitude of individuals, groups and organizations with a range of different interests and beliefs, all pursuing their different aims. Because this realm is generally so large, at least in democratic nations, the policy world tends to break itself down into smaller entities that can focus on specific issues or areas (which also make it easier to study a policy process in a particular topic area). These self-organizing systems are generally based on broad sectors, such as health or

agriculture, which are also large, and so smaller groups within these occur, which have been described as specialised 'sub-systems' focussed on specific policy issues (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993). Actors in a policy sub-system may act as individuals or organizations, but grouping into networks, coalitions and alliances allows actors to also act collectively in their policy advocacy, sharing attributes such as expertise, experience and credibility for what is generally agreed to be increased effectiveness in pursuing their aims (Mooji and de Vos 2003, te Lintelo, Nisbett et al. forthcoming). Theories of group-government relations posit a trade of information for policy-making access between these groups, who become expert in their chosen issue, and the bureaucrats and policymakers tasked with making policy decisions, granting special access to successful groups (Cairney 2012). Some authors have gone as far as identifying features of actor networks that are thought to increase effectiveness in advocating for specific positions or agendas, such as connected and effective leadership; governance structures capable of resolving disputes; and diverse composition (Shiffman, Schmitz et al. 2016). Questions remain however over the impetus for groups to form (common interests (Baumgartner 2009) or common beliefs (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993)); the relative importance of different types of groups such as epistemic communities (defining knowledge and evidence), global public policy networks (involved in resource allocation and policy delivery), and transnational advocacy networks (undertaking agenda setting and advocacy work)); and how these different networks overlap in terms of membership (Stone 2004). Overall, a distinction in actor groupings has been made between an issue network, a generally large and unstable grouping comprising all of the groups and individuals acting in a particular policy space, where conflict is likely among members but contrasting views are brought to a policy issue; and a policy community, a generally much smaller and exclusive grouping of like-minded actors generally closer to the actual creation of policy (Marsh and Rhodes 1992).

Dominant international narratives therefore do not encounter a vacuum at national level; rather they have to interact with myriad established and emerging ideas, interests, preferences, philosophies and beliefs within political, policy, technical and lay communities in the national political and policy arena. Recognising this, the current research has sought views from actors who have a predominantly national or international roles, as well as explicitly seeking out those who travel between these policy worlds from global institutions into Zambia's policy sphere, and those within as well as outside the immediate nutrition policy world in Lusaka, to obtain different perspectives on how international narratives travel, how national politics interact, and what this means in practice for nutrition policy and action. This

chapter looks specifically at the actors involved in the issue of nutrition policy in Zambia, to understand how their interactions have affected policy and practice for nutrition.

6.1 *Nutrition communities: bringing the global to the local*

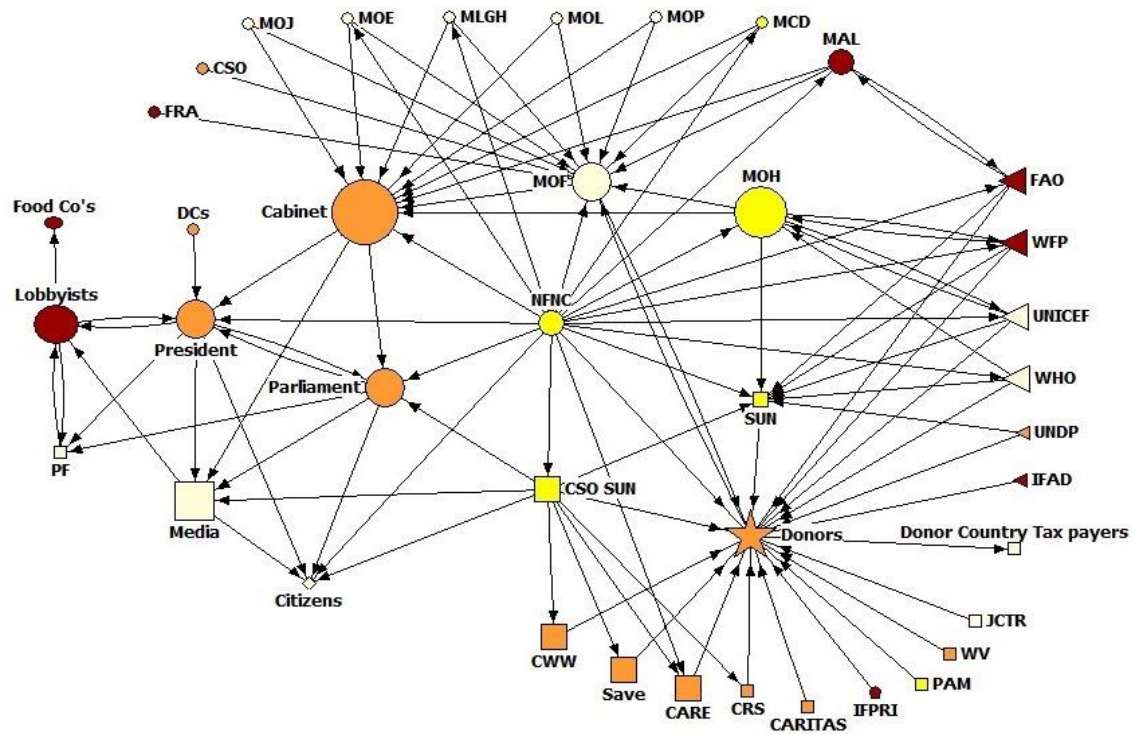
Given the multiplicity of actors present in the Zambian nutrition landscape, a social network mapping exercise was undertaken in Lusaka in mid-2015 to identify which organizations were involved in the issue of nutrition policy and practice at national level in Zambia; how much influence different organizations had over the issue; and - to separate those peripherally involved to those centrally involved – which organizations were accountable to which. As described in more detail in chapter 2, a group of actors involved in nutrition policy and practice was convened, and the NetMap method used in asking this group these three questions in turn, creating a physical map showing the links between organizations. Organizations involved, links of accountability, and attribution of relative influence were added by consensus within the interview group, and the map was then transferred to a matrix in Excel software and loaded into the Vizualyzer social network analysis software for interpretation. The resulting network map reflects the consensus views of key respondents from a range of organizations involved in nutrition issues at the national level. Notably absent from the respondent group were representatives of cabinet, parliament, media or food company lobbyists, who were invited but declined to attend; adding their views might have changed the influence scores in the network, though likely not the network structure itself, which was felt by respondents to be complete.

Fifty-seven actor entities (in this case, organizations rather than individuals, as explained in chapter 2) were mentioned in the NetMap group interview: 40 are linked through accountability as reported by respondents, and shown on the map (Figure 6.1); the other 17 are not shown on the map because they have no direct accountability links, though are peripherally involved in nutrition policy and practice in different ways and so appear only in Table 6.1. In addition to the accountability links, influence scores for the different organizations represented, agreed by respondents, ranged from 0 (no influence assigned over nutrition policy or programmatic decisions in Zambia, but involved in the issue) to 4 (most influential, shown by the size of the organization's bubble on the map); influence is also denoted by the amount of accountability owed to or by an organization (in-links and out-links, as shown by the arrows on the map).

Accountability is often invoked but rarely defined; for the NetMap group interview, an open discussion on the meaning of formal and informal accountability was led before the map-making process started, and a guiding definition used by many business manuals was provided to the group: that accountability is ‘the obligation of an individual or organization to account for its activities, accept responsibility for them, and to disclose the results in a transparent manner’³¹. te Lintelo (2014) divides accountability into two more actionable elements: *Answerability* combines ‘the right of the party that holds account to receive appropriate information from the accountable party’ with ‘an obligation [of the accountable party] to justify and clarify through public dialogue [their] choices’. *Enforcement* ‘considers that accounting actors do not just critically challenge accountable persons but are able to reward good performance as well as impose negative sanctions in case of improper behaviour’. The network map below appears to be capturing several forms of accountability within these definitions, including financial accountability through funding contracts (for instance, between NGOs and Donors, or operational ministries and the Ministry of Finance); institutional accountability in terms of management or oversight structures (for instance, between NFNC and MOH, or UN agencies and line ministries undertaking specific projects); and political accountability through the processes of democracy (for instance, in the nexus between the institutions of government, the media, and citizens).

³¹ Business Dictionary: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/accountability.html>

Figure 6.1: Accountability and influence of actors in the Zambian national nutrition landscape, 2015



Notes:

- Relative influence of each actor was calculated by dividing the assigned influence value for each actor by the highest influence allocated by the respondents. Size of the actors on the maps then denotes relative influence assigned by respondents
- 'Citizens' explicitly included 'voters'; 'farmers'; and 'community as recipients of programs'. There was a sense in the discussions that these were separate in people's minds as 'urban citizens and rural subjects'; Community and Citizens were noted as separate actors, although when voting and political mobilization were discussed they were conflated.
- 'Donors' mentioned were Dfid, Irish Aid, SIDA, World Bank, EU, and USAID.
- 'Food companies' mentioned were agro-dealers, beverage companies, food manufacturers / processors, millers, retailers, ZamBeef, and ZamSugar.
- 'SUN' was understood as the broad SUN Movement, and explicitly incorporated the Zambian SUN Fund as a separate entity to its individual donors.
- 'National NGOs' were mentioned in connection with donors and citizens, but accountability links were not made explicit by the respondent group so these do not appear on the network map.

SECTOR

- Food/agriculture
- Multi-sectoral
- Nutrition/health
- Other

ACTOR TYPE

- Civil society
- Community
- Donor
- Government
- Private sector
- Research
- United Nations

Table 6.1: Full list of entities mentioned in the national Netmap

ACF	Action Against Hunger	MAL	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
BAZ	Biofuels Association of Zambia	MCD	Ministry of Community Development
Cabinet		MOE	Ministry of Education
CARE	Care International	MOH	Ministry of Health
CSO	Central Statistical Office	MOJ	Ministry of Justice
CARITAS	Caritas Internationalis	MOL	Ministry of Lands
CHAZ	Churches Health Association of Zambia	MLGH	Ministry of Local Government and Housing
CAZ	Cotton Association of Zambia	MMD	Movement for Multi-party Democracy
Citizens	<i>See note above</i>	NAZ	Nutrition Association of Zambia
CRS	Catholic Relief Services	NFNC	National Food and Nutrition Commission
CSO SUN	SUN Civil Society Organization	NISIR	National Institute for Scientific and Industrial Research
CWW	Concern Worldwide	PAM	Programme Against Malnutrition
DCs	District Commissioners	President	
Donors	<i>See note above</i>	PF	Patriotic Front
Donor country taxpayers		Parliament	
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Org.	Save	Save the Children
Food Co's	Private sector food companies	SUN	Scaling up Nutrition
FRA	Food Reserve Agency	TDRi	Tropical Disease Research Institute
Harvest+	HarvestPlus	UNDP	UN Development Programme
IAPRI	Indaba Agriculture Policy Research Institute	UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
IBFAN	International Baby Food Action Network	UNZA	University of Zambia
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development	UPND	United Party for National Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute	UTH	University Teaching Hospital
JCTR	Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection	VP	Vice President
Lobbyists	Specifically food industry lobbyists	WV	World Vision
Media	Various forms of media	WFP	UN World Food Programme
Mining	Mining industry	WHO	UN World Health Organization
MOF	Ministry of Finance	ZARI	Zambia Agricultural Research Institute
		ZNFU	Zambian National Farmers Union

There are a range of sectors and of organisation types represented in the network, reflecting the breadth of issues that impact directly on nutrition and the diversity of beliefs about how best to address these. Multiple sectors are represented, but predominantly those working specifically on nutrition, those working on health, and those working on agriculture. Overall however there are two very distinct groups working in this network: those with predominantly international provenance, funding, and outlook; and those grounded in national institutions and receiving Zambian government or private funding. The network can therefore approximately be seen in two halves: the upper and left-hand side of the network map is broadly related to national institutions, including the core executive and financial mechanisms of government; government's national institutions including technical ministries, parastatal organizations, and opposition political parties; private sector food companies and associated lobbyists; the media; and Zambian citizens. The lower and right-hand side of the network map is broadly related to international institutions with a foothold in Zambia, including donors and their taxpayers; the SUN movement and associated Fund and advocacy groups; UN agencies; and international NGOs (the exception is PAM, a large national NGO but with international funding). The division in the map between national and international groups through accountability links is striking; while links between these entities may exist for other issues, in terms of nutrition policy and practice the national and international groups are largely isolated from each other. In the network map, only seven actors are linked to both 'sides' of the network: in the centre are the NFNC, MOH, and CSOSUN, with multiple links to both sides on nutrition issues; in addition, MAL and FAO are linked reciprocally, and MOF and Donors are also linked reciprocally.

In the government cluster, Cabinet has most assigned influence (a score of 4), and also one of the highest numbers of in-links, with ministries, parastatals, and the NFNC accountable to them. Cabinet in turn must account to the Parliament and President, but these have half as much influence directly over nutrition policy and practice (a score of 2), and fewer accountability in-links for this issue. Of the Ministries, the Ministry of Health has most influence over the issue (score 3) and several in-links; the NFNC is accountable to MoH, as are several UN agencies involved in aspects of nutrition. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (score 1) also has influence over nutrition policy and practice issues, but far less than MoH. The Ministry of Finance has less influence on this issue (score 2) than MoH, but has the second highest number of in-links, with accountability required from all ministries (including Health), and from the international Donors on joint nutrition spending; all structures of government account to MoF in

terms of budget accountability, and MoF accounts to Cabinet and the President, as well as to Donors for nutrition funding allocated through government. No other ministries were assigned influence over the issue of nutrition policy and practice, though several were noted to be involved, and few had any in-links of accountability owed.

Zambian citizens, the main opposition political party, and district commissioners, as well as food companies and the Food Reserve Agency, were assigned zero influence over the issue of nutrition policy and practice in Zambia. Notable on the national side of the network however are the media and food-industry lobbyists, with medium influence scores and several in-links. Despite its lower influence, the media (score 2) is owed accountability from the three major government institutions - Cabinet, Parliament and the President - as well as CSOSUN; this was felt by respondents to be due to the influence of the media over representations of nutrition policy to the public. The media in turn is accountable to Zambian citizens and also to food industry lobbyists, and so is not completely neutral. Lobbyists (score 3) were felt to have equal influence to the media, the President and Parliament; they were felt to have accountability both to and from the President and the main opposition party, and to be owed accountability from the media, and to only be accountable to food companies. The links between food companies, food industry lobbyists and the government were not explored further in the context of the NetMap interview, but were felt to influence policy related to food in Zambia.

On the international side, donors were assigned the most influence (score 3); this is less influence than assigned to cabinet, but donors have the most number of in-links in the network, double the number of accountability links owed to cabinet (19 vs 10). The major UN agencies (FAO, WFP, UNICEF and WHO) were seen to have influence (score 1) and mutual accountability with their relative Ministries (MOH and MAL) as well as accountability to donors. A majority of NGOs, although noted to be involved, were not assigned any influence (score 0). Exceptions were the large international NGOs CWW and Care, co-custodians of the SUN Fund, and Save the Children; these are all accountable to donors and also have in-links from CSOSUN, with whom they work closely.

Only the three organizations working in the centre of the network (NFNC, CSOSUN, and MOH) are accountable to both sides of the network – national and international – on the issue of nutrition policy and practice, and connected to the most powerful actors on each side. Of these three main centre players, only MOH has any in-links of accountability owed to it, from some of the UN agencies; the rest have only out-links of accountability owed to others. The organisations

in the centre of the network for nutrition were NFNC and CSOSUN; both were assigned low influence and accounted to numerous structures of government as well as international organizations. NFNC (score 1) has zero in-links, but owes accountability to 18 different institutions and organizations on both sides of the network, including the two most powerful actors (cabinet and donors) and its mother Ministry, MOH. CSOSUN (score 1) accounts to a range international organizations, including donors, and Parliament and Zambian citizens. It also has a notable relationship with the media. Beyond influence and accountability, CSOSUN was also reported to represent several national NGOs who do not appear on the network map but were mentioned in the interview; NFNC is reported to be accountable to CSOSUN because of this civil society representation.

What influence NFNC does have derives from its mandated role for nutrition, and its existence as a hub of most nutrition capacity in the country. The NFNC has been hampered in its prescribed convening role by its placement within the MOH, thus depriving it of the power to convene other ministries due to its low positioning in bureaucratic structures. The NFNC Act is under revision for a third time in 2016-17, with discussion centring around NFNC's mandate, and the placement of NFNC outside of the MOH, perhaps within an executive or planning office of government, to give it (in principle at least) increased coordinating power between the different ministries involved in food and nutrition policy, in line with nutrition's multi-sectoral agenda.

CSOSUN's influence on the other hand was felt by respondents in the NetMap interview to come from its connection with the media and therefore the potential to get its message out broadly to the public. To some extent, CSOSUN has played a brokerage role between the international nutrition community in Zambia, with its stunting and multi-sectoral agenda and its bringing of evidence and funds; and the national policy and political community, in particular members of parliament and the emerging cabinet committee for nutrition. CSOSUN's parent entity, SUN, has a significant number of actors accountable to it, but was not assigned high influence. SUN's influence was reported to be derived from financial resources through the SUN Fund – this is how more coherent nutrition policy is being paid for, currently – but also as a broader movement than just the Fund, encompassing key international ideas and the actors and organizations that espouse them in the national nutrition policy and practice arena. MOH was assigned high influence over the issue of nutrition policy and practice, but has few entities accountable to it. Its influence therefore comes from something other than the accountability of others, reported by respondents to be its responsibility for approving nutrition policy created by

the NFNC, so strong potential veto power over a policy progressing to being legislated and implemented. MOH also has influence over NFNC (and NFNC is accountable to MOH) because of NFNC's bureaucratic positioning as a sub-department of MOH in government structures.

Analysis of the content of the network map therefore reveals several important issues for nutrition policy and practice in Zambia. While there is action from multiple actors and organizations, the national and international actors remain largely separate, linked through two key broker organizations in NFNC and CSOSUN. The actors with most influence over nutrition policy and programme decisions are international financial donors, providing funds and linked to the normative international nutrition community, and the cabinet, approving policy; these institutions are not mutually accountable, however, on the issue of nutrition.

In informal conversations (outside of formal research interviews) with some in the executive arm of government with an interest in nutrition, an interesting distinction has been made between accountability to international pledges (often purely financial accountability) compared to accountability to the Zambian people nationally (political accountability). These MPs have expressed reservations in regard to international pledges to increase funding or activities for nutrition such as those made at the 2013 Nutrition for Growth event and similar international events. These were said to present challenges in the political sphere, since political parties in power were only truly accountable to promises they made to the electorate as part of electoral processes. In addition, international and national commitments are sometimes not completely aligned; for instance, the Nutrition for Growth commitments to the international community committed to *'reduce chronic undernutrition by 50 percent in ten years'* (from 45 percent to 23 percent between 2013-2023), while the NFNSP strategic aim written in the national nutrition strategy document commits that *'By 2015 stunting among children less than two years of age will have been reduced from 45% to 30% (SNDP target) nationally'* (2011-2015, a target that has already been missed). These are similar targets, but not the same, so to which commitments are which sections of government to be held to account? This is not clear in the Zambian context, with international and national groups remaining largely separate, and building separate sets of goals and targets which confuses the accountability issue and leads to lack of clarity in reporting also.

Building on the idea of national accountability to national populations, CSOSUN initiated a campaign in 2016 to make nutrition an election issue, with advocacy work to encourage the electorate to demand nutrition action from those who wish to be voted for. Nutrition was a clear

section in the manifesto of the winning party, PF, providing specific policy measures (though not targets) to which to hold the government to account in the current parliament, but there is still a need to reconcile the multiple targets if accountability lines are to be clarified within nutrition policy.

6.2 Coalitions of the willing? Policy community cohesion

Having proposed that multi-sectoral action for stunting reduction is a dominant discourse in the international nutrition system (chapter 3) that is being brought to Zambia by development actors (chapter 5), it is then necessary to look at other groups within the nutrition policy network who may be promoting different narratives of the nutrition problem and its solutions in Zambia, and how these interact. Different nutrition-related issues have different levels of priority for different actor groups, and there are multiple interrelated and overlapping policy issues, even within the field of nutrition itself, vying for political attention in Zambia, which make prioritization difficult (see chapter 4). The following sections look in more depth at the different groupings that exist around different framings of nutrition in the national nutrition policy process in Zambia, finding that these issue groups share key features of advocacy coalitions (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993).

As Schattschneider (1975) commented, in the end it is conflict over issues, and the ways that people divide into groups around a question, that leads to agendas being set and to policy maintenance or change. There are different ways to assess this division, but a widely-used policy science theory that has endured for its holistic vision of the policy process is the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993). The ACF explicitly uses the concept of policy sub-systems for specific issues, as the grouping of experts and interested parties that have a bearing on policy for a specific issue. The method charts the belief systems, resources and strategies of actors within the sub-system in order to identify advocacy coalitions, or actor groupings with similar beliefs and policy positions which are likely to advocate in similar directions on policy issues. The concept of common beliefs as binding a coalition is a departure from much policy science literature, which has focused on common interests as a primary motivation for lobby groups; the ACF holds that groups held together by often short-term interests are 'coalitions of convenience' rather than true advocacy coalitions, and are likely to be less cohesive and therefore not dominate over time (periods of a decade or more in most ACF work) (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1994). Thus in true advocacy coalitions, it is ideology rather than interests that inspire coalition formation and continuation, and belief systems are a key

factor. The sharing of principled values has been identified as a defining feature of transnational advocacy networks in international development, such as the international nutrition community (Keck and Sikkink 1998), thus the concept of beliefs is likely to be a factor particularly in the formation of national coalitions that stem from these international groups.

The beliefs of coalition members are divided into a hierarchy from more to less abstract beliefs, with the more abstract and deeply-held normative beliefs both constraining less abstract policy beliefs, and more difficult to change (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1994, Weible and Sabatier 2007, Cairney 2012): Normative core beliefs are part of a person's most fundamental personal philosophy, based on a person's basic ontological views of how the world works, and are most resistant to change; examples are the relative importance of individual liberty versus community security, and the basic left/right political divide. Policy core beliefs relate to fundamental policy positions such as the proper balance between government and markets, and whether policy should try to solve social problems; deeply held policy beliefs may be difficult to change through persuasion, but beliefs with some empirical content are more likely to change with changing evidence. Secondary policy beliefs relate to the instrumental mechanisms that might best enact policy ideas, such as administrative rules and budgetary allocations for delivery of policy; these beliefs are the most likely to change over time, and least likely to be the binding beliefs of a coalition. The ACF therefore explains change in policy as following change in the belief systems of dominant coalitions. Belief changes in turn stem from either major events external to the sub-system, such as changes in the policy environment to which coalitions must adapt or from which they can learn; or internal shocks within a sub-system, where accumulation of learning demonstrates the policy core beliefs of a dominant coalition to be failing, or those of a challenging coalition to be confirmed (Weible and Sabatier 2007). As might be expected, changes in a coalition's secondary beliefs lead to minor change in policy instruments, whereas changes in policy core beliefs lead to major changes in policy approaches (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993).

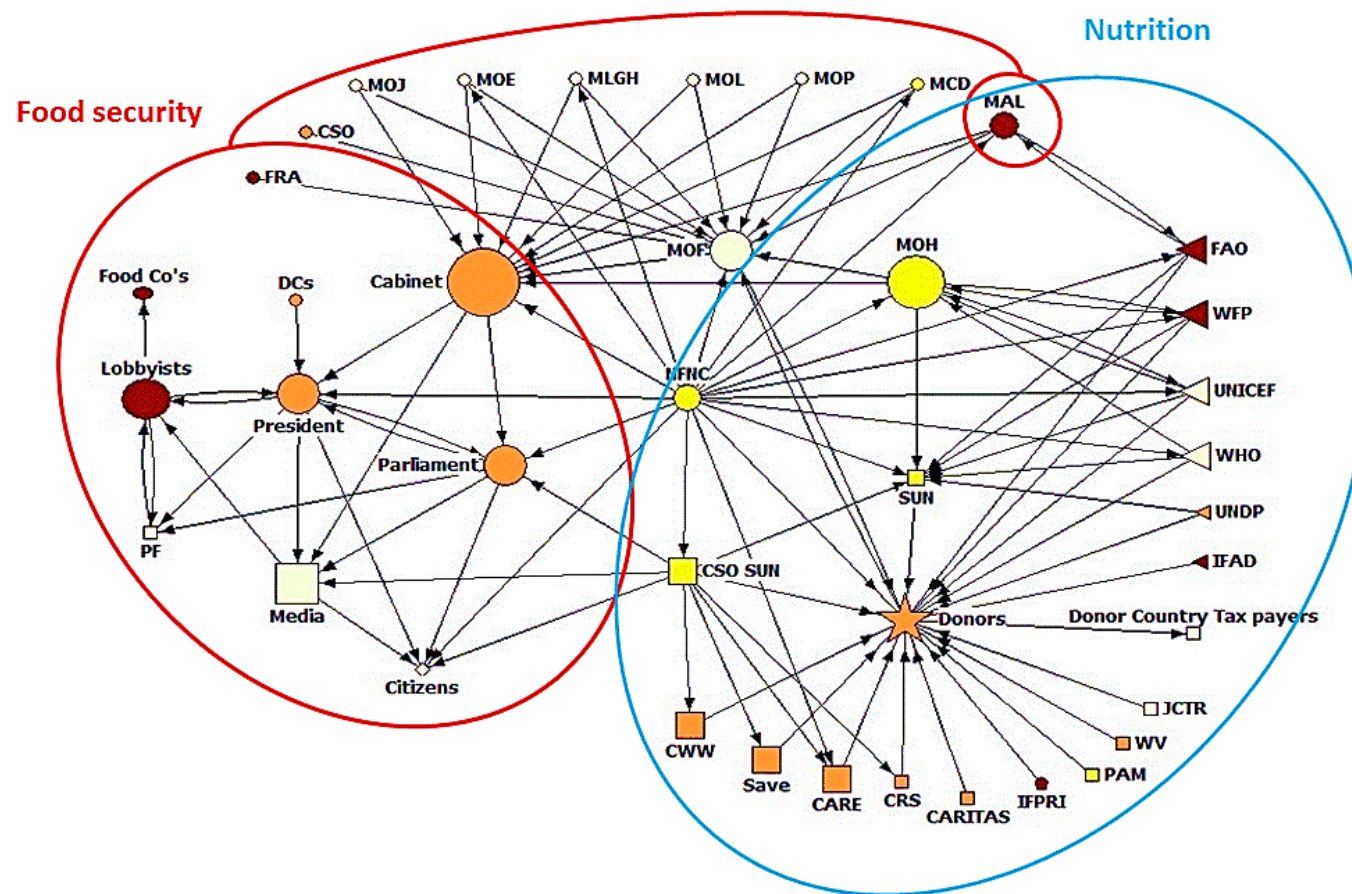
6.2.1 Key coalitions for nutrition in Zambia

In all, the network shown in Figure 6.1 makes up the 'policy sub-system' for nutrition (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993). The issue of nutrition in Zambia struggles to find an institutional home, batted about between agriculture (which often does not see its role extending to what people eat), and health (predominantly dealing with the clinical consequences of poor nutrition). This is not an unusual case: nutrition has long suffered from being the issue

that is everybody's business but nobody's main responsibility (Berg 1987). Even nutritionists themselves often do not understand what nutrition requires in different sectors: "*they want you to be like a health nutritionist*" said a respondent from the agriculture sector in interviews for this research. Mirroring this divide, there are two different coalitions within the nutrition policy sub-system in Zambia, one largely based in the agricultural sector and focussed on food security, and one largely based in the health sector and focussed on nutrition.

Historically, the dominant framing of nutrition in Zambia has been around food security and hunger, and a major coalition within the overall nutrition policy sub-system is an influential group promoting maize production and calorie availability as a core policy response to food insecurity and hunger in Zambia. This *food security coalition* has existed in Zambia for many decades. Recently however, there has been a change in framing of the complex causes and consequences of malnutrition in parts of the Zambian nutrition policy sub-system, and change is evident in the way people speak about how nutrition was tackled 'before' versus 'now'. Among a second coalition of nutrition actors in the Zambian nutrition policy sub-system, this change relates to the framing of stunting as the major issue to address, and action by multiple sectors, not just one or another, as the route to addressing it, as shown in chapter 5 above. This *nutrition coalition* is relatively new to the Zambian nutrition policy process. The position of each of these major nutrition-related coalitions – the food security coalition and the nutrition coalition – is overlaid on the policy sub-system in Figure 6.2, and elaborated below. Advocacy coalitions can comprise organizations, parts of organizations, and individuals; as the NetMap in this case focussed on organizations rather than individuals, there is an overlap between coalitions as shown on the map, signalling that even within different departments in the same organization, malnutrition and its potential solutions are seen differently by different individuals.

Figure 6.2: Advocacy coalitions in the Zambian nutrition policy sub-system



6.2.1.1 Nutrition coalition: Stunting and multi-sectoral action

The review of international priorities in chapter 3 showed that child stunting is the current focus of the largest current global efforts on malnutrition. High stunting levels in Zambia provide a particular opportunity for advocacy, either from a perspective of a moral imperative to reduce high levels of stunting in children, or when stunting is framed as a drain on national economic development. Many nutritionists internationally, and increasingly in Zambia, prefer to recognize the multi-factorial and therefore multi-sectoral nature of malnutrition summarized as the interplay of food, health and care determinants; and highlight impacts on issues as diverse as child survival, educational potential, and economic development. With this framing comes more clarity on sectoral roles in the bigger nutrition picture: the health sector is required to address curative nutrition programmes but also provide a strong set of preventive child health interventions; the food and agriculture sector is required to produce or make available both sufficient quantity (calories) and quality (nutrients) of food; and other sectors also have a role, such as social security payments to make food and health accessible to low-income households, or school meal programmes to provide nutrition for learning children, all with a focus on improving malnutrition rates as the ultimate outcome. As this multi-sectoral narrative has been propagated in Zambia, so nutrition technical departments of several operational ministries in Zambia have become more closely involved in nutrition as their discrete roles are clarified: *“To us they are farmers; to ministry of health they are sick or they’re patients”* said a nutritionist from the agriculture sector responding in this research.

The national members of the nutrition coalition therefore draw from different ministries; some members have been working on nutrition issues for some time, but some have also been unclear on how to frame their contribution to nutrition within ministries that focus predominantly on other issues. The MOH has historically been strongly involved in aspects of nutrition policy and programming, and is the parent ministry of the NFNC whose core role is nutrition. The most common focus of nutrition action in Zambia until recently has been the treatment of acute malnutrition (wasting) and micronutrient deficiencies. From the early 1970s to the late 1990s, studies were undertaken and policies and programmes put in place to address these issues, largely administered through the health sector. These issues have not gone away, but the discourse dominant within the nutrition coalition has moved away from addressing these as a priority. While strategies for early identification, treatment and follow-up of acute malnutrition are included in the 2011 NFNSP and 2013 MCDP, there are currently no national

guidelines for the community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM, seen as international best practice in addressing acute malnutrition), and some respondents in this research felt that the acute malnutrition agenda in particular was being forgotten in the rush to address stunting. The rapid broadening and changing of the nutrition agenda and its actors away from clinical and curative aspects towards preventive and multi-sectoral aspects has to some extent limited the role of the MOH in implementing nutrition policy. While the change in focus is understood by those working in the nutrition policy sub-system, this has therefore caused tensions in the nutrition community as it plays out, which weakens the nutrition coalition.

At the same time, a narrative involving the importance of diverse diets for nutrition, and therefore a need for production and availability of more diverse foods across food groups, is starting to become visible in nutrition discourse in Zambia. MAL's food and nutrition section has historically found it difficult to find support for this goal in a ministry focussed predominantly on maize production, but as part of the nutrition coalition is finding its voice and focussing on this issue. MCD as the technical lead on social protection and Zambia's ramping up of cash transfers has been urged to make these sensitive to nutrition, and a cash transfer pilot project was evaluated in part for its impacts on nutrition (which were found to be substantial, but only in the presence of maternal education and clean water) (Seidenfeld 2014). The MOE has seen renewed attention to its nutrition education curriculum and school feeding programme as the stunting and multi-sectoral coalition has brought more attention to nutrition. Thus sections of several non-traditional ministries are now part of the nutrition coalition, which is a significant change over the past decade.

Those seen by respondents in this research to be driving the nutrition coalition are not however these national actors, but rather the UN agencies, international NGOs and international donors who are bringing the stunting and multi-sectoral narrative from the international realm and introducing it to the national context. In the UN, UNICEF and WHO in particular are taking the lead due to their nutrition mandates, but sections of FAO and WFP are also promoting the narrative of increased diversity in agricultural production and food access that is a part of the multi-sectoral agenda. International NGOs are also active in the nutrition coalition, including Concern Worldwide and Care International as coordinators of the SUN Fund. To trial the multi-sectoral approach to stunting reduction in Zambia, the NGO Concern Worldwide implemented a five year programme from 2011 to 2015, the Realigning Agriculture to Improve Nutrition (RAIN) project across the agriculture and health sectors aiming to improve homestead food production

and infant and young child feeding in one district. While some parts of the programme worked, most outcomes were not achieved even with this best-practice programme, and stunting in fact was worse in the intervention group than the control arms (Kumar, Nguyen et al. forthcoming). The failure of this high-profile programme in Zambia did not change the focus on multi-sectoral approaches to stunting reduction in national agendas, however, despite previous reviews also showing no impact on stunting outcomes of multi-sectoral programmes (Berti, Krasevec et al. 2004, Masset, Haddad et al. 2011). The focus of international donors and implementers for nutrition in Zambia remains the funding and implementation of multi-sectoral approaches for stunting reduction. This is largely because the theoretical basis (based on the multiple determinants of malnutrition in the UNICEF framework (UNICEF 1990)) remains intact; because stunting remains a strategically ambiguous concept capable of underpinning the conceptual assimilation of multiple sectors; and because much of the nutrition community both internationally and in Zambia remains committed to the technical health and agriculture interventions that underpin this multi-sectoral action.

Linking the national ministries with the international organizations in the NetMap are NFNC and CSOSUN, national organizations which nevertheless receive a significant portion of funding and much technical support and input from the international members of the coalition. The NFNC has particularly close ties with the SUN Fund, which is jointly administered by NFNC, Concern, and Care. While day-to-day management is undertaken by the international NGOs, funding decisions are also signed off by NFNC, an arrangement which has been reported in this research to cause some tension within the community as the NFNC feels mistrusted and overseen by the NGOs. The SUN Fund also provides a majority of funding for the running of CSOSUN. These organizations, while national in provenance and staffing, cannot therefore be interpreted without reference to their reliance on international organizations for their effective functioning. In totality these organizations – sections of national ministries, international NGOs, financial donors, the UN and the boundary-spanning NFNC and CSOSUN – make up the nutrition coalition, whose policy beliefs, resources and strategies are discussed below.

6.2.1.2 Food security coalition: Calorie availability and hunger

The most common view of malnutrition among Zambian policy makers and the public outside the nutrition sub-system, if it is thought about at all, is of hunger as a food security issue that results from poverty. As introduced in chapter 4, the major focus of the agricultural sector remains national food security through staple food production, normally equated in political

rhetoric with maize self-sufficiency. Because a majority of voters in Zambia are from farming households, and farming is linked so intimately with maize – and because maize-meal prices affect Zambian consumers even if they are not producers – maize-supporting policy is tacitly a huge political and vote-winning issue in Zambia. Maize policy is therefore highly political, with maize security and maize-meal prices recurring sources of popular discontent, political rhetoric, and policy and budgetary commitments; as the current vice president opined at a nutrition meeting discussing changing agricultural policy in 2015: *“If you touch maize, you lose an election”*. The major drive for a food security rather than a nutrition focus – very crudely, a quantity rather than quality argument – therefore comes largely from the executive section of government, both responding to and shaping the views of the media and citizens which revolve around Zambians being able to feed themselves and fill their bellies.

The agriculture ministry (MAL) is the only ministry that is part of both coalitions, with different departments or sections of the ministry tending towards different framings of the issue in line with their mandate. The key split is between the department of agriculture, responsible for the FISP programme and therefore key to the food security coalition; and the food and nutrition section (which sits within that department), focussed on dietary diversity and diet quality, and part of the nutrition coalition. The other operational agency in the food security coalition is the Food Reserve Agency, the parastatal organization tasked with providing price support to maize through a buying programme and maintenance of a strategic reserve. In addition, the executive arm of government (president, parliament and cabinet) are members of the food security coalition, supporting food security policies as key to hunger reduction and rural development, as well as political parties cognisant of maize’s vote-changing potential, and district commissioners appointed by the government. Many food companies and their lobbyists are also bound up in the food security narrative, largely because industry has become dependent on government subsidies and the input supply systems which underpin government-led food security programmes (Mwanamwenge and Harris 2017). Finally, there is a nexus between the beliefs of citizens and their representation in the media, with the voting and farming public in particular supporting a food security and maize-supporting narrative, and the media in general supporting this. Thus it is largely national institutions maintaining a belief in the importance of food security and the reduction of hunger through calorie production, as opposed to largely international organizations supporting a belief in multi-sectoral action for stunting reduction.

6.2.2 Coalition beliefs

6.2.2.1 Normative core beliefs

The nutrition coalition, as largely international in genesis and organizational makeup, can be interpreted as an international grouping in the vein of advocacy networks, organized groupings created to support causes, which tend to be motivated by shared values (Keck and Sikkink 1998); and of epistemic communities, networks of professionals in a particular issue-area, which tend to be motivated by shared interpretations of knowledge (Haas 1992). Many working in international development profess values of altruism, though certainly also moderated by cynicism and realism on the part of those who have been working in this complex arena for some time (Schwenke 2009). The nutrition coalition, with its moral imperative of reducing malnutrition in children, and its use of scientific evidence and understanding to frame a multi-sectoral path to achieving this, is thus largely held together by its normative core belief in a set of ideas around providing help to people and doing social good. There are a range of practical approaches to achieving this however. The traditional humanitarian approach that drew many into international development work, with its focus on neutral and externally-provided assistance based on need, has increasingly merged with a development approach that sees assistance largely as supporting state intervention, and these have recently been joined by a focus on market-led approaches to improving nutrition which are attracting much international funding (FAO 2014).

The concept of increasing staple food yields to promote calorie availability and food security also has an international genesis (Borlaug 2000, Hazell 2009), but has been largely accepted by agricultural ministries in most developing countries, and so this narrative can be seen in Zambia as largely nationally-backed. The food security coalition, as a largely national grouping led by the government executive, can therefore be interpreted through the political norms of the country. Zambia's political history is dominated by its first charismatic president, Kenneth Kaunda, who ruled Zambia from independence in 1964 until 1991. Under his increasingly autocratic leadership, Kaunda introduced the philosophy of *Zambian Humanism* as the national philosophy, explicitly rejecting both the capitalist and communist models (Sekwat 2000) and declaring the country part of the non-aligned movement, despite accepting aid from both sides in the Cold War (DeRoche 2007). Based on African Humanism, *Zambian Humanism* was centred on Kaunda's interpretation of traditional African social norms combined with Christian values; its main tenets included egalitarianism, inclusiveness, mutual aid, man-

centeredness, respect for human dignity, and communalism, among others, and its primary reform measures after independence included state participation in the economy including public and private sectors, rapid development of the rural sectors, and curbing of domestic exploitation by foreign entities (Sekwat 2000). While these socially focussed reforms brought economic growth for a while, Zambia's reliance on copper revenues to fund government programmes drew it into the global financial shocks of the early 1970s and started a decade of economic slide which culminated in the initiation of internationally imposed structural adjustment policies in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Andersson, Bigsten et al. 2000). While the economic trend of the past decades in Zambia has been increasingly towards capitalism and privatization, Humanism is still promoted as the state philosophy, and Zambia has been described as socialist in its outlook, with centre-left socialist political parties ruling for the past twenty-five years.

Both coalitions can therefore be said to share normative core beliefs broadly supportive of socially-focussed intervention, either by government or by civil society, into community issues such as hunger and malnutrition. Both coalitions can be described a broadly left-leaning in philosophy but increasingly market-oriented by necessity of the practicalities of providing assistance and participating in the global economy, and neither coalition is fundamentally opposed to either government intervention or market responses.

6.2.2.2 Policy core beliefs

As discussed in chapters 1 and 3, nutrition means many things to many people, including within the nutrition community. The historic framing of malnutrition as hunger or lack of enough food was gradually subsumed in narratives of malnutrition as resulting from lack of a quality diet and an unhealthy body's inability to utilize food properly. This dichotomy in framing – of malnutrition as hunger, or as lack of a diet quality and freedom from disease – is what largely characterises the difference in policy core beliefs between the two coalitions in Zambia's nutrition policy sub-system.

Though it is the most recognized form of malnutrition, many nutritionists in recent years have distanced themselves from the concept of hunger as comprising part of their work. This surprises many outside the nutrition community, who assume that avoidance of hunger is avoidance of malnutrition. Indeed, for many years hunger was the major preoccupation of those seeking to improve nutrition, with the Green Revolution in particular premised on the need to provide enough calories for a growing world population (Borlaug 2000, Hazell 2009). Consuming

enough food to achieve daily calorie requirements is necessary but not sufficient for adequate nutrition by modern definitions, however; to avoid malnutrition, a person must also consume food of adequate quality in terms of fats, proteins and carbohydrates (macronutrients), and vitamins, minerals and trace elements (micronutrients), and be healthy enough to utilize these in the body (Ruel, Harris et al. 2014). Pushing back against the primacy of calories and staple food production, and introducing the concepts of diet quality and of the need for good health and childcare practices for nutrition, has been difficult for the international nutrition community however; an effect of this effort has been to downplay the role of hunger, relegating it to the realm of food security, and to make a clear distinction between food security and nutrition, leading to the current awkward phrase ‘food and nutrition security’ used in much formal documentation on the issue. The international nutrition community and the Zambian nutrition advocacy coalition largely subscribe to this multi-causal view of nutrition, which side-lines issues of food quantity and hunger in its promotion of arguments relating to food quality (particularly the need for dietary diversity and therefore the availability and accessibility of diverse nutritious foods) and the need for multi-sectoral action to cover food, health and care issues identified to underpin nutrition status (UNICEF 1990).

In Zambia, by contrast, maize is central to daily diets and traditional culture and agriculture (Richards 1939). Maize subsistence in a region of rain-fed agriculture and increasingly poor soils is a risky business however; maize yields in Zambia are variable over time, rising significantly since 2010 but with declines in production in 2015-16, and reductions in maize harvests from two years of poor rains predicted to see Zambia needing food imports for the first time in years in the 2016-17 agricultural season (FAO 2016). Farmers therefore cannot guarantee sufficient harvests each year for their own households’ consumption, with household maize stocks generally depleting before the subsequent harvest, creating an annual seasonal hunger gap for those without resources to purchase from the market; nor can national output guarantee sufficient production to keep consumer prices low all year round (FAO 2016). Hunger statistics are therefore closely linked to maize production as the major staple food, and poor and worsening undernourishment numbers show 48 percent of the Zambian population to be undernourished, or hungry, at certain periods of the year (FAO 2015). Subjective indicators of income satisfaction and ability to afford food have to some extent tracked maize yields, given that a majority of the Zambian population works in semi-subsistence agriculture (Harris, Drimie et al. 2016). The largely nationally-based food security coalition therefore focuses on hunger as

the key priority, in the belief that filling the bellies of rural populations and supporting rural agricultural livelihoods is the answer to questions of both nutrition and poverty.

Both coalitions identify poor rural communities as the group whose welfare is of most concern, along with poor urban communities, but within these broad sub-populations the two coalitions' beliefs about the nature of the underlying issue causes them to focus on different sections of that population: The food security coalition broadly sees hunger as the issue, producing more staple food as the answer, and therefore (mostly male) maize farmers as the key target group; while the nutrition coalition broadly sees a nexus of lack of food quality and access to health services and adequate child care as the issue, coordinating access to these multiple services as the answer, and therefore (mostly female) home gardeners and food preparers and child carers as the target group. This fits well with the ACF's prediction that advocacy coalitions interpret the same information in different ways, leading to divergence and mistrust, and that coalitions tend to differ most on policy core beliefs (Sabatier and Weible 2016). In Zambia, there is little interaction between members of the two coalitions, who exist largely in separate policy worlds.

6.2.2.3 *Secondary policy beliefs*

Stemming from core policy beliefs relating to perceptions of the key issues and understanding of their causes and solutions, the two coalitions propose different policy alternatives. The nutrition coalition has been influential in formulating nutrition policy within the health sector that speaks to the roles of other sectors, as shown in chapter 5, with a focus on improving diet and health during pregnancy and in a child's first two years in the 2013 MCDP programme. In terms of administrative arrangements, the nutrition coalition has focussed on multi-sectoral coordination, with concerted effort to bring together key operational ministries at national level for planning and strategy meetings, and catalysing the creation of multi-sectoral operational plans involving these ministries at district level. The SUN movement in particular has multi-sectoral platforms as one of its key interventions required of participating countries (SUN Secretariat 2012). Budgets under this policy are therefore split between ministries, with new budget lines having been created in the five key operational ministries in 2015-16 in response to new funds made available by donors supporting the stunting and multi-sectoral agenda, as reviewed below.

The food security coalition is narrower in its policy scope, with two key policies within the agriculture sector comprising its policy options: a maize production input subsidy (Farmer

Input Support Programme (FISP)) and a government buying scheme for maize price support (Food Reserve Agency (FRA)). These policies are based completely in the agriculture sector, administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and the parastatal organization FRA. A large proportion of the agriculture budget goes towards these two maize security measures, which together aim to ensure higher production and guaranteed sales for farmers, and lower prices for consumers (Chapoto, Chabala et al. 2016).

6.2.3 Coalition resources

Analyses under the Advocacy Coalition Framework cover the full policy cycle, so beyond policy agenda setting and formulation, an assessment of resources for implementation is required (Sabatier and Weible 2016). While economic resources may not be necessary or sufficient in driving issues onto the policy agenda, once issues have emerged then the availability of funds for different policy options can change the political calculus of leaders by giving them more resources available to address social issues by different routes (Reich and Balarajan 2012). In Zambia, implementation of health-sector nutrition policy is largely funded by international donor resources; national ministries have minor nutrition departments with funding for salaries but little for programmes. Implementation of food security policy however is largely nationally funded, through the agriculture sector and smaller programmes under the ministry of community development. The sections below explore these resource allocations in detail.

6.2.3.1 International funding for nutrition

The actor group owed the most accountability in the policy sub-system Netmap, by far, was international financial donors; along with Cabinet, donors were also assigned the most influence over the issue of nutrition policy and practice in Zambia (Figure 6.1). The role of aid in general – and funding for nutrition in particular – is therefore a topic to be explored further for its influence on nutrition policy. The topic was also raised repeatedly in interviews: national actors talking about funds tended to note the importance of budgets and funding for implementation in a fairly linear fashion; from the international community however, perspectives were strikingly different to each other in the way they portrayed the goals and process of the provision of funds. One donor respondent saw the donor-government relationship as *“[giving] money to the government to implement the policy that is measured against indicators agreed both by the [donor] and the government, and we deliver the different tranches of money to the government depending on their success in those indicators. And I think what’s*

interesting about the case [here] is that we supported the government so we trusted government policy to achieve results”, implying a strongly top-down rationale with donors largely calling the shots, releasing funds when they were happy that government would comply. Another international actor with an African perspective criticised this way of thinking, suggesting instead that the international community should be *“seeking to avoid the not uncommon practice of “nutrition neo-colonialism”, going into countries with preconceived project ideas and expecting governments to comply”*. Thus there are different perspectives in respondents’ discussions about donor funding and the respective roles and influence of donors and government.

In the network map, the groups most closely aligned with the international donors are the large international NGOs and the UN agencies, both of which groups rely in major part on these funders for their existence, as is the case in most development contexts (te Lintelo, Nisbett et al. forthcoming). The more interesting relationship is between the donors and national groups, with accountability links inwards to donors from the financial arm (Ministry of Finance) and key technical department (NFNC) of the Zambian government, according to national policy respondents in the NetMap interview. The sections below explore this relationship from both historical and contemporary perspective, in order to understand the role of international financial donors in a sovereign nation such as Zambia.

In 2014, a special collection of papers (commissioned by a UK university and funded by DFID) on the issue of undernutrition in Zambia exhorted the Zambian government to ‘turn rapid growth into meaningful growth’ by devoting bumper mining revenues and the proceeds of high GDP growth to programmes aimed at improving nutrition, as an investment in the human capital of the next generation (Harris, Seco et al. 2014). Two years later, a major slump in Zambia’s economy in 2015-16 meant that these calls rang somewhat hollow, and reductions in economic growth forecasts will likely further impact on government revenues available for core functions and services, including those relating to food and nutrition. There is something of a fiscal cushion, however: Zambia, like many low- and middle-income African countries, is highly dependent on foreign aid in its various forms³², which has historically bolstered many core public services.

³² Official Development Assistance (ODA), or ‘aid’, can be classified on the basis of origin (bilateral or multilateral); on the basis of method (financial aid, commodity aid, food aid, project aid, technical aid); or on the basis of purpose (humanitarian aid, development aid, debt relief). Financial aid may be tied (either to specific projects, or to specific suppliers or contractors, or both) or untied; and may be in the form of grants (not requiring repayment) or loans

Aid is also a feature of Zambia's nutrition landscape. It has been estimated that it would cost around US\$30 per child under two to scale up a package of nutrition interventions to 90% geographic coverage, averaged across high-burden countries (World Bank 2007, Morris, Cogill et al. 2008). In 2014, the World Bank calculated the cost to roll out eleven key nutrition-specific interventions in Zambia at full national coverage at around US\$48 million per year (Subandoro 2014). Nutrition in Zambia is largely internationally financed, and in interviews at national and local levels for this research the role of international organizations and donors in providing financial and in-kind resources for nutrition was a common theme, particularly but not exclusively through the SUN Fund to give impetus to the SUN Movement's stunting agenda. Total donor investment to basic nutrition in Zambia in 2014 was US\$ 9.73 million, or US\$ 3.4 per child under 5 (Francis, Harvey et al. 2016), still not meeting World Bank requirement estimates, but dwarfing national investments.

Until Zambia joined the SUN movement in 2011, donors supported separate nutrition projects according to their own agendas, but SUN called specifically for better alignment of donor support for nutrition. Initially an informal grouping of donors was convened by UNICEF and DFID and joined by Irish Aid, then after the group facilitated Zambia's incorporation into SUN, it expanded and became formally the SUN donor group³³, with a mandate to support government nutrition policy priorities. In 2013 a pooled funding mechanism – the SUN Fund – was established to catalyse implementation of nutrition programmes in several high-burden areas, in the hope that government funding would be forthcoming to scale up and maintain implementation (Seco, Sadlier, and Brunet 2014); this mirrors the general trend in aid for efficiency through a sector-wide approach rather than project support. In Zambia, over US\$ 110 million has been pledged by international donors for nutrition-related projects in the period 2017-18 (Oliver Wakelin, personal communication, October 17th 2016), a significant ramping up of financial support from the previous figures available of just under US\$ 10 million disbursed by donors in 2014 (Francis, Harvey et al. 2016). If actually disbursed, these pledges would bring

(requiring repayment of either the principle loan, or interest, or both, at either market or concessional rates). Commodity aid may be in the form of cash tied to purchase of a specific commodity, or the commodity itself (e.g. food grains). Technical aid may be in the form of direct recruitment of technical experts, or the training of existing staff. Finally, foreign direct investment (an investment made in business interests in another country) is also sometimes categorized as aid. (Author's summary from multiple sources)

³³ DFID and UNICEF as co-convenors, with member organisations including USAID, the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Bank, the European Union, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the World Health Organization (WHO)

spending well over the amounts suggested by the World Bank analysis, though these funds are not all coordinated in terms of location or project focus.

The SUN Fund pools resources from the key nutrition donors DFID, SIDA and Irish Aid (though notably not the World Bank or USAID, which conduct their own programmes separately). The SUN Fund is funded and run by international agencies with oversight by the NFNC; NFNC was not seen by donors as having the capacity to run the fund itself, so fund management was given to the NGO Care International, and the steering committee has representatives from government, NGOs and donors. This dichotomy in management and oversight was bemoaned by some respondents, who saw the process as cumbersome and increasingly political and fractious. Zambia is about to embark on design for 'phase two' of the SUN Fund, intended to be designed through sharing and learning in international fora with other SUN countries, combined with the political realities of Zambia (Hughes 2017).

6.2.3.2 *National revenues for nutrition*

In terms of national funds, revenues are highly variable and are not sufficient for fully funding all programs and services to which the government is committed, including nutrition. While several social services are jointly funded by donor and government money, Rakner (2012) finds that the Zambian government has tended to withdraw its support for these institutions in parallel with donors, suggesting that these agencies would not be adequately funded by government if donor support for them was completely withdrawn. Harris and Drimie (2012) noted that nutrition is highlighted as a lower priority area within the health sector, and budgetary allocation to nutrition is thus not prioritized, and interview respondents for this research still felt this to be largely the case at national level. Within the health sector, under which most nutrition spending falls, Zambia is a signatory to the 2001 Abuja Commitment of the African Union that calls for an allocation of at least 15 percent of the government's budget to the health sector. Government spending on health has been allocated at between 8 and 11 percent of the national budget between 2011 and 2016, reaching a peak of 11.3 percent in 2013, and staying stable in monetary terms but falling as a percentage of the budget since 2014 (UNICEF 2016).

Zambia is a significant outlier among countries with a high burden of malnutrition, spending significantly less on nutrition per child under five as a proportion of its general social spending per capita than its peers (IFPRI 2016). A statement made by the former Vice President at the 2013 Nutrition for Growth conference in the UK specifically pledged to fill human resource

and financial gaps for nutrition in key line ministries and increase government nutrition expenditure to US\$30 per child under five as signalled in the international literature, including a minimum 20 per cent annual budget increase (Nutrition for Growth 2013). New budget lines expressly for nutrition have been created in key line ministries since this pledge (to enable them to use SUN Fund resources), but still currently all of these commitments are found to be off-course (Francis et al. 2016).

Allocated funding through the national health budget to 'national food and nutrition services' in 2010 was ZMK 4.8 billion (pre-rebasing of the currency to the ZMW, equal to just over US\$ 1 million), with an additional ZMK 23 million for capacity building of nutritionists, ZMK 21 million for clinical nutrition training, and ZMK 3 million for development of nutrition education materials³⁴. The Government of Zambia doubled the health budget in 2013, but within that overall budget very low allocations for nutrition have been the trend for many years, with a key nutrition policy document noting in 2011 that budgetary allocation for nutrition activities has been declining. By current estimates, around 0.1% of the national budget, or just under US\$ 1 million, constituted government spending towards nutrition in the 2015-2016 budget (Francis et al. 2016). Although this represents an increase of 33% from the 0.03% allocation for nutrition 2014, allocations have reduced again slightly in 2016, with a disconnect between budget allocations and the lower amounts subsequently disbursed and spent. This level of budget allocation is considered extremely low to make an impact on the malnutrition numbers in Zambia. While there exists a promise to increase national funding for nutrition, an overall financial system to reconcile estimates of costs with national investments across sectors and external contributions to the implementation of nutrition policy and plans is not fully in place (Richards and Bellack 2016). Information on financial tracking is currently only available on domestic and external contributions for specific programmes, though the government is working on the development of a mechanism to track nutrition funds from pooled funds (such as the SUN Fund) or direct support (by donors or international organizations to individual projects without going through government systems), as well as government funding itself.

The required budget for nutrition under existing estimates is large, and if existing sources are not sufficient then some have suggested the need for 'innovative' funding solutions, defined

³⁴ The old Zambian Kwacha (ZMK) stood at around 4,500 to the US Dollar in 2010. The new Kwacha (ZMW) stood at around 6 to the US Dollar in 2014 after the currency was rebased (1,000 ZMK = 1 ZMW) in 2013. In 2016 the ZMW stands at over 9 to the US\$.

as ‘anything other than a traditional grant’ (Beesabathuni 2016). Fraser (2007) has suggested that increased revenues from copper sales and taxes could be used to reduce reliance on donor funding in general, and more recently Harris et al. (2014) recommended ploughing more copper revenues into nutrition in particular, given the high development returns on investment in stunting reduction. But these calls were made when copper prices were high or rising; recent plunges have shown this to be a risky strategy over the longer term, and any increases in mining taxes are politically difficult. A recent paper (Beesabathuni 2016) suggests that additional funds for nutrition-sensitive activities would come from line ministries of other nutrition-related sectors such as agriculture and education, and this can be seen in some projects in Zambia—although in Zambia as elsewhere, these sectors are also stretched, and it tends to be the other way around, with SUN funds being channelled to line ministries to undertake nutrition-sensitive activities that are not prioritized under current funding plans. Beesabathuni (2016) reviews other innovative financing mechanisms used in different sectors that could be applied to nutrition, particularly through public-private partnerships, including consumer contributions such as through service charges; performance-based mechanisms such as development impact bonds tied to development performance; and securities and derivatives such as targeted investment funds on the open market. These options remain to be explored for nutrition in general, and in Zambia in particular.

6.2.3.3 *Funding food security*

In the agriculture sector, Zambia signed the Country Compact for the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) in 2011. One of the main points in the CAADP is the increase in agricultural budget allocations to 10 percent of total government spending. Between 2004 and 2010, the national agriculture budget varied between 5 percent and 8 percent of the total national government budget (increasing), but has yet to reach 10 percent (te Lintelo and Lakshman 2015). Within the sector, the share of the agriculture budget allocations to FRA and FISP activities is very high, with around 80 percent of the national agriculture budget spent on FISP and FRA in recent years; as a result, very little funding is available for MAL’s core functions such as research and development, extension services, irrigation, livestock development, and rural infrastructure (Kuteya, Sitko et al. 2016).

Assessments of FISP and FRA subsidies have found that while distribution of fertilizer raises maize yields, poor targeting means that it is generally wealthier households and input dealers who gain most benefit, and centralized government distribution raises programme costs

so much that cost-effectiveness is negated while potentially more efficient private sector purchases are crowded out (Baltzer and Hansen 2011, Chapoto, Zulu-Mbata et al. 2015, Kuteya, Sitko et al. 2016). Because of these negative findings, and also fundamental ideological disagreement with the concept of agricultural subsidies, some financial donors are conditioning their loans on restructuring or removal of these programmes. In 2016, Zambia started negotiations with the IMF for a 1.2 billion dollar loan for instance, which comes with a condition on restructuring of FISP and FRA³⁵. Change has already started, with a pilot of an electronic voucher payment system for FISP undertaken in 13 districts in the 2015/16 agricultural season which enabled recipients to choose among seed and fertiliser options available at local distributors and agro-dealers³⁶, with around 15% of households redeeming the voucher for agricultural inputs other than maize and fertilizer in this first year (Kuteya, Sitko et al. 2016). Despite a lack of formal impact assessment of the pilot project, successful rollout led to expansion to 39 additional districts in 2016/17.

Less than 0.001% of the agriculture budget was allocated to nutrition activities in 2016, after a budget line on 'food processing and utilization' was introduced in 2015 (Francis, Harvey et al. 2016). This budget is largely used to pay salaries in the food and nutrition section, including nutrition officers in the districts. There is little project funding for nutrition available from the agriculture budget despite the inclusion of a nutrition objective in the 2016 National Agriculture Policy; much of the nutrition work undertaken by this sector is funded through the SUN Fund. The focus of the agriculture sector is therefore very much on food security, rather than nutrition by broader definitions.

6.2.4 Coalition strategies

The food security coalition has a long history in Zambia, with its main policies entrenched in agricultural policy documents, funding cycles and bureaucratic structures. The strategy of this coalition is therefore largely to maintain business as usual, drawing on cultural and historical framings of maize and the economic and social realities of rural life to preserve its food security focus in the media, the popular imagination, and in major policies. The nutrition coalition is newer to the political arena in Zambia, and particularly in its modern form promoting stunting

³⁵ Source: Bloomberg, accessed August 2016: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-08-18/zambia-imf-reached-broad-consensus-on-imf-package-lungu-says>

³⁶ Musika: <http://www.musika.org.zm/article/84-fisp-electronic-voucher-program-to-promote-diversification>

reduction and multi-sectoral action (and therefore directly challenging the food security narrative) has only emerged in the past ten years. While the stunting discourse has become the dominant frame within nutrition policy written in the health sector, it is currently the food security coalition that sees its policies implemented at a national scale and with national funds, and is therefore politically dominant. The challenging strategies of the nutrition coalition are therefore discussed below.

Nutrition considerations are not a high priority in the maize-driven agricultural political economy. Rather than tackle the food security narrative head on therefore, the nutrition coalition has sought to use technical arguments to bring small changes in the direction of improved nutrition. A primary narrative that is designed to speak to the financial and executive arms of government is of nutrition as both an input into national development framed as economic growth, and an outcome of it. This narrative has gained ground internationally as well as in Zambia in recent years, with the Lancet series in 2013 concluding that *“undernutrition reduces a nation’s economic advancement by at least 8% because of direct productivity losses, losses via poorer cognition, and losses via reduced schooling”*, and calculating that for every 10% in GDP growth, countries see on average a 6% reduction in stunting (Ruel, Alderman et al. 2013). This has been interpreted by some as meaning that a focus on economic growth is sufficient to solve the stunting problem, though the authors of this study are careful to point out that relying solely on economic growth would take decades to reduce undernutrition levels, and that there is a commensurate gain in overweight and chronic diseases with GDP growth. Others have interpreted findings on the association between per-capita GDP and child growth at national level to mean that economic growth has little impact on stunting, suggesting that specific action to reduce undernutrition is also needed (Vollmer, Harttgen et al. 2014). Due to the concerted efforts of the nutrition coalition in Zambia, the Sixth National Development Plan (SNDP 2011-2015, revised 2013-2016) which guides overall development in Zambia, explicitly recognises good nutrition as an input into national development, and outlines some broad approaches to improve nutrition in the country. Nutrition’s mention in the development plan locates the sector as important to the nation, so its inclusion was an important strategic success for the nutrition coalition.

Recognizing that the agriculture sector is key to diets and nutrition, a particular narrative that the international nutrition community has used in its call for multi-sectoral action is that of the need for dietary diversity, and therefore more diversity in the production and availability of

food groups other than cereals. In Zambia, it is recognized that this means challenging the primacy of maize. In different fora, the nutrition coalition has either implicitly or explicitly called for a diversification away from maize and into, in particular, pulses, fish, fruits and vegetables as nutrient-dense foods that already appear in the Zambian diet but not in sufficient amounts or diversity for good nutrition. The nutrition coalition promoting this narrative of diversity rarely explicitly engages with the social and political reasons for the dominance of the maize discourse explored above, however – holding neither the political clout nor, in many cases, a clear overview of the political economy of maize dominance in Zambia – and in maintaining its technical framing holds itself separate from Zambian politics more broadly. While the diversity narrative is finding its way slowly into policy and practice, a better understanding of the political economy of maize in Zambia would better guide the nutrition coalition’s diversification strategy.

A final strategy of the nutrition coalition has been to increase awareness of the stunting issue, and understanding of its determinants; the existence of credible indicators of a problem has been found to be a vital piece of commitment-building in multiple countries (Pelletier, Menon et al. 2011). The availability and interpretation of nutrition data in the country, and in particular awareness of the headline stunting statistics, was cited by several respondents in this research as being integral to increasing personal and organizational attention to the undernutrition issue in recent years. Most often, this was framed as a revelation, that people hadn’t been aware of the high stunting rates, nor of their significance for child health, cognitive development, and national development; the existence of high rates of stunting was claimed by one Member of Parliament interviewed for this study to have been largely unknown about until recent years, and to still be unknown by many making policy decisions. This is despite nutrition surveys dating back to at least the early 1990s, whose results did not make it into the consciousness of politicians or decision-makers. Respondents in this research cited the role of key evidence as a focusing event bringing attention to nutrition (in particular the 2008 Lancet series), and the role of the nutrition coalition in framing stunting reduction as multi-sectoral in starting to bring more policy actors on board.

Most recently, the Zambian nutrition coalition tried to create its own policy window to generate increased commitment for nutrition funding and action from the national government during the 2016 general election, with CSOSUN securing pledges from all major political parties as to what they would do for nutrition if elected, and working with them to refine and clarify pledges in the hope that these would be incorporated into party manifestos. This aimed to

ensure that no matter who won, civil society would have commitments to which to hold parties to account after August 2016. The manifesto of the winning party, the Patriotic Front (PF), recognizes poor food security and nutrition numbers from recent surveys, and pledges to support diversification of agriculture and of diets and to promote nutrition education, school feeding, and supplementary feeding for pregnant women. In addition, the manifesto calls for scaling up the social safety net cash transfer programme, which has been positively evaluated for its effect on nutrition where clean water and sanitation are also present (Seidenfeld 2014); promoting programmes around reproductive health rights and nutrition for women; maintaining food security subsidies such as FISP and FRA; and investing in horticulture and livestock alongside maize, calling for an ‘agrarian revolution’ pursuing, among other things, ‘national and household food and nutrition security’ (Patriotic Front Zambia 2016). Through a combination of strategies therefore, the nutrition coalition is being heard by some in government.

It is the ability of advocacy coalitions to embed their beliefs in institutional policy processes that matters in changing policy (Hajer 1995). Because stunting can be framed either as an input into or outcome from so many other key development issues, the stunting narrative can to some extent logically refute or subsume many other arguments about ways to address the issue: Economic development arguments can be framed as being hindered by a cognitively stunted workforce; and food security arguments can be framed as not going far enough towards diet quality as well as quantity. Therefore as in the international nutrition community reviewed in chapter 3, in Zambia the strategic ambiguity of what the concept means in practice is used by the nutrition coalition to bring multiple different actors on board. However, as internationally, the coalition tends to present the issue in technical terms, limiting what can be done in response.

Even while the nutrition coalition has made headway in inserting its own interpretation of the stunting issue and undernutrition more broadly into the Zambian nutrition policy sub-system, there have been those who have pushed back on the use of a measure of stunting against an international standard valid for assessing malnutrition. One lingering narrative that appears to have been carried over from previous eras of nutrition thinking is that stunting is a genetic issue, the results of a genetic trait for shortness in the Zambian population rather than a result of poor health and diets. This narrative was evident in this research in the private beliefs of an eminent doctor, among others: “[Malnutrition] has been here for quite some time- now I’m just wondering, the stunting itself, maybe we need to ask is it genetic?” This narrative has also been deployed strategically to discredit emerging nutrition narratives that impact on existing

policy focus on food security. The former Vice President, when giving interviews to the press after a nutrition research event convened by members of the nutrition coalition in 2014, made comments construed as backing the ‘genetics’ argument: *“You see, Zambia is not all about the Bantu Botatwe people. Zambia is a mixture of people from different parts of the continent including the Pygmies or Bushmen. We have people in Zambia whose ancestors were Bushmen and they are small people, some of them live in and around the Bangweulu swamps. So if these people from London come to do research on malnutrition and they see a 45 year old man looking like he is 10 years old, they quickly conclude that he is malnourished, but that 45 year old man can run faster than a lion.”*³⁷ While the international nutrition community calls upon international evidence from multiple countries showing that well-fed, healthy children from any population can achieve the same range of heights (WHO Multicentre Growth Reference Study Group 2006), and that this should be no different in Zambia, where analysis of wealth quintiles shows that wealthier sections of the population do indeed have less stunting than poorer sections (Central Statistical Office et al. 2014), such technical arguments do not reach the general population, where the former Vice President’s narrative is likely to carry weight, particularly when the issue of child stunting is so widespread that it becomes invisible within the population (Haddad 2012).

Thus the technical and largely national level focus of the nutrition coalition’s strategy may be starting to change hearts and minds within the nutrition policy sub-system, but has not engaged to a large extent with either the political economy of maize dominance, or the popular view of hunger and malnutrition. It is likely that a lack of attention to these important aspects would limit the ability of the nutrition coalition to become dominant over the food security coalition in implementation of policy affecting nutrition. One issue of note however is that large international financial institutions such as the IMF are ideologically opposed to the kind of government subsidies, such as FISP and the FRA, that support maize production in Zambia, and a condition of the latest IMF loan offer is that these are dismantled. This would change the political dynamic considerably if implemented, and might remove a huge political barrier to the stunting coalition in removing the major policies of the food security coalition, thus leaving a vacuum that the nutrition coalition could position itself to fill. Zambia has a long history of resisting conditions imposed by its international backers however, so whether this radical change in policy direction will happen is yet to be seen.

³⁷ <https://www.lusakatimes.com/2014/09/24/guy-scott-disputes-fao-report-zambians-undernourished-people-africa/>

It has been seen in other contexts in relation to food and nutrition policy that political and economic interests, as well as beliefs, remain of analytical importance in assessing the actions of coalitions (te Lintelo and Jan 2008). Beyond the coalitions' successes and failures, there is therefore a question of whether the coalitions are in fact comprised of members sharing core beliefs in these approaches (a 'true' advocacy coalition in the tradition of the ACF), or whether these are 'coalitions of convenience' sharing interests, or a mixture of both (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993). In the nutrition coalition, it is possible that the core of international actors – sharing beliefs and values – might have co-opted some national actors under a 'coalition of convenience' due to the increased resources and support they are making available. NFNC in particular is a clear hub for nutrition in the policy sub-system, but all of its accountability connections are outwards, meaning it must try to please multiple different actors, and it was not assigned high influence by respondents in this research, so its control over the issue clearly does not match the multiple and central roles assigned to it. Combined with a dichotomy in funding – with core funding for salaries from government and project funding to undertake programmes from donors – NFNC can be seen as a boundary spanning organization with many masters and little power, and therefore potentially aligning itself with dominant coalitions as they arise in order to maintain influence and relevance. Thus it is unclear whether NFNC as an organisation, and to some extent the nutrition sections of technical ministries, are aligned with the stunting coalition because of the core beliefs of the individuals working on nutrition, or the short-term interests of its members. Similarly, the food security coalition is comprised of organizations that have been working for many years on the FISP and FRA programmes that are now entrenched in bureaucratic and economic systems in Zambia, and that are shown to bring in votes. This agenda also benefits and speaks to many private sector food companies and their lobbies, including the parastatal Food Reserve Agency (FRA) which buys and distributes a large proportion of maize production in the country. Thus while members of each coalition can be shown to share beliefs at multiple levels, from normative to operational, there may also be shared material interests that might keep coalitions together, or keep some members affiliated.

6.3 Political will: government commitment to nutrition

Often lamented in assessments of nutrition policy and action is a lack of 'political will'. While this lack may be the product of a stronger political will to pursue other goals that resonate more strongly with a particular government at a particular time, the positive aspects of this rather nebulous concept have been more usefully defined in a paper by Pelletier, Frongillo et al.

(2012): Important distinctions can be made between political attention (often at a high level, such as being mentioned in Presidential speeches), political commitment (such as executive directives or setting of targets), and system-wide commitment (such as allocation of the necessary authority, accountability, and resources to relevant bodies and the exercise of oversight). It is only through all three layers of government commitment that policy change and programme implementation will be sustained (Heaver 2005). Also 'government' itself is not monolithic but rather comprises different sections with different roles, mandates, interests and actors, and the commitment of different parts of government to issues of nutrition is likely to be different at different times. For this work, one useful distinction is between 'technical' and implementing arms of government (NFNC and the key ministries) and the financial and executive arms; this distinction is used below. These definitions and distinctions start to bring conceptual clarity, and are used to tease out the elements of commitment assessed below.

Government commitment to its food security policies, FISP and FRA, is demonstrated through long-term budgetary and implementation commitments and the centrality of these programmes in government speeches and media releases. In addition to beliefs around the centrality of maize production as integral to food security and rural livelihoods, more immediately political reasons have been put forward as to why the government is so committed to these programmes. A recent study found a clear political advantage to FISP in particular, with households in constituencies won by the ruling party in the 2011 presidential election receiving significantly more subsidized fertilizer than those in areas lost by the ruling party (Mason, Jayne et al. 2013), despite other studies showing that most programme benefits accrue to less-poor and less politically well-connected households (Baltzer and Hansen 2011). A study in neighbouring Malawi found that even in the absence of targeting distributional programmes to specific households or areas, political parties may nonetheless derive political benefit just from having these programmes in action (Dionne and Horowitz 2016). Each of these findings suggests an electoral motivation for the continuation of FISP and FRA, with commitment to the policy either in anticipation of new votes, or rewarding current supporters and keeping their support for the next election. As a result, government becomes trapped in policy terms, even in the absence of achieving many of their stated aims on reducing food insecurity for the poorest farmers (Chapoto, Zulu-Mbata et al. 2015).

Beyond food security, several studies have attempted to classify countries' standing on the governance of nutrition issues in the past few years, using various methods and indices. In

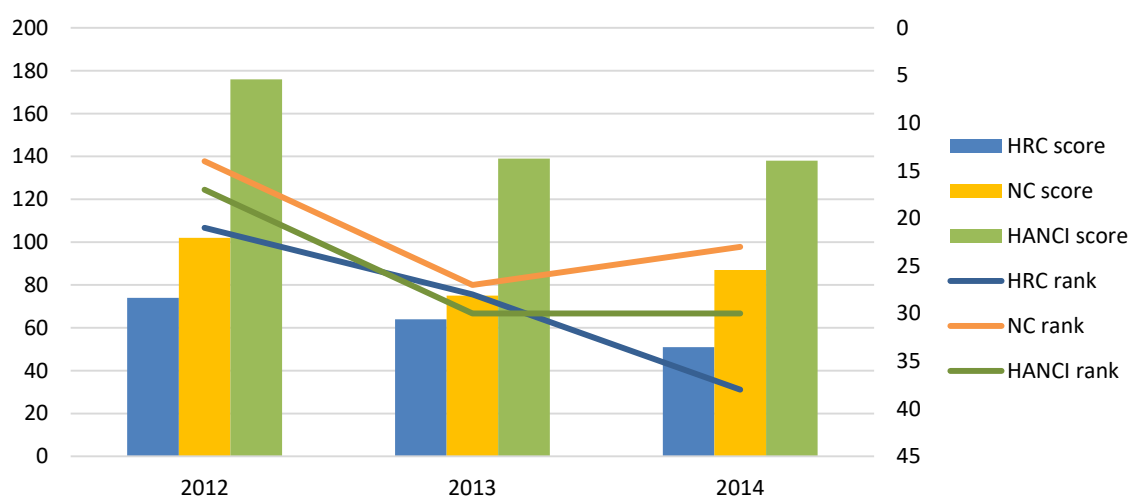
2009, Zambia's readiness to accelerate action on nutrition issues was classified as "medium" using a composite score that looked at commitments in PRSP and United Nations Development Assistance Framework documents and a measure of nutrition governance, including elements of inter-sectoral collaboration; existence of nutrition plans, policies, and programs; and allocation of budget (Engesveen, Nishida et al. 2009). This research was undertaken immediately before Zambia's first big nutrition policy meeting, and just as the information from the first Lancet series was emerging, so provides an interesting baseline of commitment immediately before Zambia joined SUN. Also prior to SUN, in 2010 Zambia was ranked 19th out of 28 developing countries assessed using the ActionAid HungerFREE Scorecard, which looked at hunger outcomes and trends, agriculture, social protection, the legal framework for nutrition, and gender issues (ActionAid 2010). A 2011 study developing an index to assess a country's commitment to hunger reduction ranked Zambia 20th of 21 countries overall in an index derived from a study of legal frameworks (21st of 21), government expenditures (10th), and policies and programs (18th) (te Lintelo, Haddad et al. 2011). Zambia therefore scored poorly on these various indices of food and nutrition governance before 2011.

A study in 2012 looking back over 2011 (which was the year after Zambia joined SUN), looked specifically at the governance of nutrition in Zambia (Taylor 2012). It assessed three main pillars: horizontal coordination among sectors, vertical coordination within policy and implementation systems, and funding. The review noted that none of these pillars had been adequately addressed in Zambia due to lack of qualified nutrition staff, lack of funding in the nutrition sector, and issues with the NFNC; this last point includes the placement of the NFNC under the MoH, with a subsequent dividing of the nutrition agenda into curative (health) and food-based (agricultural) and lack of a strong mandate for either inter-sectoral work or vertical coordination for implementation. The report noted that the recent ratification of the SUN movement in the country held potential for a renewal of the nutrition agenda, and offered several suggestions for improving the situation, including lobbying for high-level political buy-in and reconnecting the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) to a higher level body, such as the Ministry of Finance or the Office of the Vice President, to strengthen its mandate; creating consensus around the stunting agenda; improving coordination between agriculture and health at the district and community levels; improving monitoring and data collection on nutrition issues; and improving financial management and accountability to allow donors to collaborate effectively with government.

Between 2011 and 2014, a group in the UK (te Lintelo, Haddad et al. 2011) has produced an annual ranking of 45 countries experiencing high levels of hunger and undernutrition, scoring them on hunger reduction commitment (HRCI); nutrition commitment (NCI); and a combined hunger and nutrition commitment index (HANCI). While its scores for the various indices have increased over time since 2012, Zambia is falling in the country rankings on all three metrics as other countries out-perform it (Figure 6.3). Indicators for the NCI include presence of a budget for nutrition (Zambia scored moderately in 2014, having a sectoral budget for nutrition but not separate budget lines); enshrining of key infant feeding legislation in law (Zambia scored highly on this, as aspects- though not all- of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes are in law); and enactment of nutrition-related policies and programs (Zambia scored highly on many of these, including vitamin A supplementation coverage, promotion of complementary feeding, health care visits for pregnant women, existence of a national nutrition strategy, attempts at multi-stakeholder coordination, existence of time-bound nutrition targets, and regular nutrition surveys; it scores less well on mention of nutrition in broader national development policy, and population access to improved water and sanitation). The hunger reduction index additionally looks at public spending in agriculture and health (Zambia spent around 5% of its budget on agriculture in 2014 which is ranked poor, and 16.4% on health which is ranked good); policies including land tenure (moderate), extension services (strong), birth registration (poor, at only 11.3% of live births), and social protection (rudimentary); and laws around the right to food and social security, and equality of women in land and economic rights (all poor).

Several points come from the analyses of commitment. First, Zambia has not fared well on various metrics of hunger and nutrition commitment and governance, particularly in relation to other countries grappling with undernutrition issues. Since 2014, some of these metrics have shifted (for instance, agriculture spending hit 9 percent of the budget in 2016, though health spending reduced to 11 percent; and five key operational ministries now have a separate budget line for nutrition). An analysis in 2016 comparing Zambia to 45 other African nations (where the previous HANCI analyses compared to a global set of countries) places Zambia at 17th for HANCI, 10th for NCI, and 36th for HRCI within its continent (HANCI 2016).

Figure 6.3: Hunger and nutrition commitment index for Zambia



Notes:

- Lines: right axis (relative rank out of 45 countries).
- Bars: left axis (absolute score from various combined metrics)
- HRC: Hunger Reduction Commitment; NC: Nutrition Commitment

Source: HANCI 2012, 2013, 2014 <http://www.hancindex.org/>

Second, as the HANCI index makes explicit, commitment to hunger reduction is not the same as commitment to nutrition. Zambia's rankings on nutrition commitment are improving where hunger commitment is falling, and scores are higher for nutrition commitment than for hunger commitment. This is despite major food security spending on FISP and FRA under the agriculture sector, and the fact that much nutrition spending is international in provenance. To some extent, the index may be capturing the relative functioning of the health sector (for most nutrition policy) and the agriculture sector (for most food security policy) in countries; many would say that the agriculture sector in Zambia is highly dysfunctional, with purported hunger reduction policies not actually reaching the hungry (Baltzer and Hansen 2011, Chapoto, Zulu-Mbata et al. 2015, Kuteya, Sitko et al. 2016), and this may become a political issue in the future.

Third, Zambia has been stronger so far on political commitment to nutrition than on high-level political attention (e.g. speeches) or system-wide commitments (e.g. funding) as defined above. At high level, in the offices of the president and vice president, political attention to nutrition appears to be sporadic and opportunistic. As Chilufya and Wakunuma (2015) note, there is little or no mention of the word 'nutrition' in key speeches such as the Presidential speech at the opening of Parliament or in the Finance ministers budget presentation speech. The President's team requested that a 10-point 'quick wins' for nutrition document be drawn up in

2015, however, suggesting that his office was looking to act on aspects of nutrition. Markers of political commitment also exist: Zambia was one of the first signatories to the SUN movement in 2010, and in 2013 the then- Zambian Vice-President made ambitious commitments on nutrition at the Nutrition for Growth Summit in London (Nutrition for Growth 2013). Specifically, the Vice-President pledged in front of the international community to:

- Reduce chronic undernutrition by 50 percent in ten years;
- Fill human resource and financial gaps for nutrition in key line ministries;
- Increase government nutrition expenditure to US\$30 per child under five, including a minimum 20 per cent annual budget increase;
- Encourage private sector involvement in production of nutritious foods; and
- Strengthen government governance and coordination mechanisms, including direct oversight by the Vice President and strengthening of the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC).

Subsequently a number of key milestones have been reached in government, including the development of the first Nutrition Workforce Plan by UNZA in 2013 and a subsequent version being drafted in 2016, and establishment of a Special Committee of Permanent Secretaries on Nutrition in Parliament (Chilufya and Wakunuma 2015). The incumbent Vice President is not the same as the one who actually made these pledges however, and since the replacement of the Vice President who made the public commitments to increased capacity and funding there has been relatively little from this office to continue the momentum. Recent efforts have focused on commitment to election manifesto pledges on nutrition reviewed above.

Finally, it is important to understand who is being asked to commit to different aspects of nutrition policy. It is very often the higher-level technical people from ministries who are invited, again and again, to meetings and committees called by the nutrition coalition. This was felt by some in this research to be ‘preaching to the converted’, and also not bringing in the widest range of people, or those who hold the higher power or the day-to-day control. Many of the interviews allude to lower-level bureaucrats – in planning offices in Lusaka, or provincial ministries – having to be brought on board if the coalition wishes to make headway, while much of the coalition’s current advocacy aims at the higher financial and executive arms of government.

In Zambian national nutrition policy circles the position of nutrition is felt to be precarious because of the international nature of its funding (while national government funding might be variable, it is seen as more sustained over time than donor funds, which might switch focus at any time), and a lack of government commitment at various levels. It has been found in

previous research that while availability of donor funds may facilitate the emergence of a network around a particular issue, where networks use donor funds to bypass government structures perceived as slow acting, to produce quick results in terms of projects set up or policies written, reliance on external funding such as this compromises and hampers networks over the longer term (Ngoasong 2010, Shiffman, Schmitz et al. 2016). This is found to be the case for nutrition in Zambia, where reliance on donor funds and quick wins appear to have consolidated rather than changed the government's position that nutrition does not require national funding: It was felt by some interview respondents that for all its catalysing of particular actions, the strength of the international nutrition movement embodied by SUN and its Fund may have bypassed the need for political attention, channelling resources and technical support directly to the technical sections of government such as NFNC, and moving the nutrition agenda forward quickly in terms of writing policy according to international agendas, but also limiting broader government attention to nutrition – filling the funding gap so government has less incentive to respond – and therefore limiting system-wide commitment in terms of allocating budgets to implement written policy. As one respondent in this research put it, *“SUN Fund is a catalytic process; if donors have put money in, it should compel government- but it isn't. You see the new SUN vehicles running up and down, but government is not rising to the challenge”*. Thus international financing of nutrition in Zambia may be creating rapid policy formulation and growth in overall designated nutrition funds, but is not seen to be catalysing increased or sustained commitment from government, particularly in relation to entrenched food security policies. The pattern of donor funding in low-income countries is seen to be volatile, with switches in major focus over time undermining existing programmes, and national funding (once obtained) tending to be more lasting. The nutrition coalition is therefore playing a difficult game of balancing a need for current action on technical nutrition programmes, with prospects for long-term actions backed by government.

6.4 Conclusion

The nutrition policy sub-system in Zambia as illustrated in the NetMap is currently somewhat split between national and international groups, and this split makes the sector vulnerable, with key boundary-spanning actors pulled in different directions likely finding it difficult to follow a coherent agenda. Superimposed on this general divide are the advocacy coalitions that frame the issue of nutrition in several different ways. While there is also a clear national/international divide among these coalitions, it is not absolute, with different

departments particularly of the operational ministries aligning behind very different framings of nutrition as an issue. These coalitions have different beliefs on how to approach the reduction of hunger and malnutrition in Zambia, particularly split between a malnutrition agenda and a food security agenda.

A dominant coalition in the overall nutrition policy sub-system for many decades is an influential national group promoting maize production and calorie availability as a core policy response to food insecurity and hunger in Zambia, based largely in the agriculture sector. Two key policies, a maize production subsidy and a government buying scheme, comprise the focus of this coalition, and together these have national coverage and take a high proportion of the national agriculture budget. The conflicting stunting coalition takes its core ideas predominantly from the international nutrition community, and is comprised largely of donors, UN and international NGO actors, but also the key government nutrition technical department NFNC, its parent ministry MOH, and the nutrition advocacy group CSOSUN. This coalition is trying to make nutrition multi-sectoral rather than health-sector-based as it has been historically, largely through interventions into food policy through incorporating a section of the agriculture sector, and is largely internationally funded in implementing small-scale programmes. Thus the competing agendas have been set, and coalitions are working on strategies to influence policy-makers to choose between them.

The nutrition coalition's framing of stunting as the outcome of interest speaks to an important issue of child malnutrition in Zambia. But the framing of stunting as the issue, and the need to dismantle the dominant calorie discourse of the food security coalition in order to pursue its agenda, also crowds out a focus on hunger in Zambia, which at 48 percent of the population affects more people than the 40 percent of children under five affected by stunting. Despite the best efforts of the international community in bringing a new framing of the nutrition agenda which incorporates different sectors, the reality of national politics and limited resources has meant that so far, the stunting agenda has not been able to find a way of working with the entrenched food security agenda in Zambia, and the nutrition policy sub-system remains split along hunger vs nutrition lines.

The beliefs of the two coalitions are closer than they might think, however, with normative beliefs similarly socially-oriented and pro-intervention. Policy core beliefs are where the coalitions diverge, with each focussing on a different part of the overall issue of nutrition: one on stunting, and one on hunger. Secondary policy beliefs cascade from these, with a focus

on either multi-sectoral action to address all of the complex determinants of child malnutrition, or the task of making available sufficient calories through staple food production. The policy core beliefs of each coalition might be amenable to change with evidence, communication and understanding: Hunger is still an issue in Zambia, and cannot be ignored or side-lined by the nutrition coalition in its efforts to frame malnutrition as more complex than just lack of calories; but stunting too is at unacceptable levels, and has a clear food quality component that the food security coalition can't sweep aside. Some respondents in this research professed shock at learning both the hunger and malnutrition numbers in recent years, which might provide an entry point for negotiation and change.

In practice, policy agendas may be set by a few elite members of a policy sub-system, with groups left to choose between pre-defined options, thus '*the definition of the alternatives is the supreme instrument of power... because the definition of alternatives is the choice of conflicts, and the choice of conflicts allocates power*' (Schattschneider 1975, pp.66). The stunting coalition has certainly influenced nutrition policy and programme agendas and the formulation of written nutrition policy in the health sector in Zambia, and the food security coalition has set the agenda of the agriculture sector. Therefore both coalitions are successful in getting their agendas into policy formulation in different sectors, and defining the alternatives to choose between. The food security coalition is more successful in having its policies funded and implemented nationally however, and these policies win popular support and political votes. Policy review and evaluation from various external quarters are showing that current approaches are solving neither hunger nor stunting issues, however; both hunger and stunting are important issues, and both stand at unacceptable levels in Zambia. The final chapter below completes the analysis of how power is shared or limited among policy actors in the Zambian nutrition policy sub-system, and sets out some ideas on how the nutrition policy community might begin to reconcile both issues, rather than choosing between them.

7 Legitimate power: which way forward?

The law stands between food availability and food entitlement.

Starvation deaths can reflect legality with a vengeance.

- Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, 1981

The previous chapters have shown that international nutrition as a discipline of study and a field of policy and practice has seen significant changes in focus over several decades, and have shown how both the transfer of these changing ideas through international organizations, and the role of national political agendas, are key parts of the story of Zambia's changing nutrition policy. What remains to be assessed is the role of power in these processes, as key to any policy process (including what happens to nutrition policy) is a function of the relative power of actors and coalitions to advance their ideas. After finding a clear split in the nutrition policy sub-system between the food security and nutrition coalitions (largely underpinned by an national/international divide), it was important to look at what this meant for power in Zambian nutrition policy processes, in order to understand how the two coalitions promote their beliefs, and how their divergent goals might perhaps be reconciled. This chapter takes the analysis further into an assessment of the role of power in the nexus of international and national input into Zambia's nutrition policy process, and what this means for Zambian nutrition policy going forward.

7.1 Closed and invisible: the power of language and knowledge

Underlying much of the discussion that has gone before is an implicit notion of power: Power as holding and defining certain forms of knowledge, power to promote certain discourses, power as central to intervention in national policy processes, power to command different types of accountability, and power to define policy agendas. To start to unravel the actors and interdependencies in the policy process, calls have recently been made therefore for more explicit attention to the role of power in international nutrition, and in global health more broadly (Shiffman and Smith 2007, Nisbett, Gillespie et al. 2014, Shiffman 2014). Different conceptualizations of power are reviewed below, followed by an analysis of the power dynamics in the Zambian nutrition policy sub-system.

Early conceptualizations of power in policy science had it held in the reputations and positions of those directly involved with drafting policy, but several layers of understanding have been built upon this early work. Dahl (1958) rejected reputation as the main source of power, and suggested rather that we can see power in the decisions of actors in order to study it. Subsequently Bachrach and Baratz (1962) questioned that the only power worth studying was that which was observable, suggesting that the power to set agendas and limit debate should also be acknowledged. Refining this idea, Lukes (1974) proposed that in addition to visible forms of power, hidden and invisible forms of power led populations to effectively govern themselves through socialization of preferences, and hence social norms of conduct that limit dissent. Similarly Foucault (1975) described power as embedded even in the language that is used to talk about policy, and hence to limit what may be debated. In some of the most sophisticated – but also critiqued – assessments of power therefore, powerful groups are seen as privileged in a role of social construction, defining an issue and even defining what constitutes valid knowledge about an issue, which allows them to shape policy agendas in their own images (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001).

A particularly useful conceptualisation of power in the policy process, which acknowledges a range of different definitions of power while maintaining analytical utility, is the 'power cube'³⁸. This three-dimensional representation acknowledges these different forms that power might take, and adds attention to the different levels at which power dynamics can occur, as well as different spaces in which it might manifest (Lukes 1974, Gaventa 2006). In his early work, Lukes (1974) identified three broad forms which power can take in the policy process: Visible power, such as formal rules, structures and procedures of authority which are available to all; hidden power, where certain agendas are promoted or excluded, thereby limiting or manipulating policy discourse in ways that are not immediately obvious; and invisible power, where processes of socialisation and normalisation shape ideologies and norms that are acceptable within certain actor groups in ways that participants may not even recognise as the exercise of power. Thus while formal policy decisions can be seen as a visible form of power over an agenda, less obvious forms of agenda setting exist in the informal or social realms of shaping language and discourse, and at the deepest level preferences and prejudices shaping fundamental beliefs are moulded by society, limiting even the

³⁸ The power cube approach: <https://www.powercube.net/>

acknowledgement that options exist outside of our own understandings of how the world works.

Many policy issues are dealt with at a technical level not particularly visible to the public, with specialist policy communities often insulated in their common framings, beliefs and ideas to the extent that other views become excluded from the process, and do not have access to the spaces where policies are made. The spaces subsequently identified by Gaventa (2006) as a second domain of power are closed spaces, where elite policy actors gather and decisions are made behind closed doors, with no means of participation for the uninitiated; invited spaces, where authorities decide who is invited to participate in policy debates, though often with agendas pre-defined by policy elites; and claimed spaces, where separate or emancipated groups join policy discourses and advocate for their positions without the invitation of those in charge. Policy monopoly may therefore be held by a policy community within these spaces, reinforcing certain understandings of an issue (Baumgartner and Jones 1993), and the exclusion of other groups can also be seen as a form of power to be investigated. In the third domain of power identified by Gaventa, three levels of power (global, national and local) are identified as acting on development issues, to be studied both individually and for their interrelationships.

Figure 7.1 maps key findings from the current research in Zambia to the forms, levels and spaces of the power cube. At the global level, key in this research was the international nutrition system within the field of international development, and within this the epistemic communities focused on multi-sectoral approaches to stunting reduction or calorie production approaches to hunger reduction. Within each of these communities, understanding of malnutrition's causes and solutions are seen in similar ways, and members of the different communities share broad beliefs about how the issue should be framed and therefore how it should be tackled. These epistemic communities include the researchers generating knowledge, and the donors and NGOs who catalyse the translation of ideas into policy and programmes on the ground. Epistemic communities bring their beliefs to national level, influencing different groups to share their framings. At national level, key advocacy coalitions identified are those promoting multi-sectoral approaches to stunting reduction (with predominantly international provenance as new stunting ideas are promoted, and donors as the most influential member); and those promoting food security solutions to hunger (with predominantly national provenance as ideas about hunger are embedded nationally, and

cabinet as the most influential member). At the local level, international NGOs were instrumental in bringing those international ideas ‘down’ to that level, and bringing learning back ‘up’, but local government was key to shaping what actually was done in the name of national policy, with the power to shape both implementation and learning, of which the national nutrition coalition is in need. Beyond the district bureaucracy, the power of communities experiencing hunger and malnutrition to shape nutrition policy was felt by respondents in this research to be low, with citizens allocated little influence in the Netmap.

In terms of the different forms of power, there are clearly visible written policies addressing aspects of nutrition (particularly in the health and agriculture sectors) providing authority to act on different approaches. More tellingly, what is actually funded and implemented, and therefore who has the power to make their ideas a reality, can be seen in budgets; here, international donors and national government diverge in their support for different approaches to nutrition: multi-sectoral approaches to stunting, or food security approaches to hunger. Beyond this visible power, in a hidden form, power is seen through this research to be employed through particular use of language. Above all, the concept of stunting as strategically ambiguous has, as at international level, allowed for the inclusion of new policy actors from different sectors in nutrition policy debates. However, the types of language used and the technical framing of nutrition within these debates has also limited the way that nutrition can be spoken about in different fora, and allowed for the promotion of certain norms above others for different groups. This manipulation of language in turn stems from the invisible power exerted by the scientific culture that has shaped what is seen as valid knowledge in the field of nutrition, with evidence from field trials and economic analyses privileged in policy discourse, and organizational cultures and systems perpetuating a largely technical and bureaucratic approach to nutrition policy at the expense of more inclusive framings and action. The expertise of global epistemic communities is important and brings valuable insight from certain perspectives; but it is only part of a possible solution, and the types of action promoted are constrained by the forms of knowledge seen as valid in generating understanding of the issue and its solutions.

Finally, a key space for power to work found in this research is the closed and elitist space of knowledge generation in the international scientific and policy community, seen to be driving nutrition culture and funding decisions internationally. In Zambia, a select group of like-minded nutrition technocrats working within each coalition is invited into policy and

programme discussions, but these meetings generally do not include those from the rival coalition, and therefore the coalitions are largely talking to themselves; and neither do these debates include citizens' representatives. Overall agendas in these policy discussions have generally already been set – along the lines of multi-sectoral action for stunting reduction, or input and price support subsidies for food security – with space allowed only for contextualizing modes of implementation rather than defining what is to be done. Finally, this work could not identify any claimed spaces of power in the nutrition policy process in Zambia. The food security coalition is seen to have more popular support, with food security policies providing important political constituencies with benefits which, despite criticism of the policies' achievements in practice, is shown to generate political benefit. But the nutrition coalition has far less engagement with citizens, with even the leading civil society organization for nutrition having been set up by the international community under SUN. National groups normally powerful in Zambian civil society (such as the churches) are largely silent in the national nutrition policy debate, uninvited by an international community premised on very different views of the world, and excluded through the types of language and knowledge held valid in policy debates.

Figure 7.1: Levels, spaces and forms of power in Zambian nutrition policy processes



Source: Analysis by the author. Power Cube adapted from Gaventa 2006

Conspicuous in their absence, at the local or national level or in claimed or invited spaces of power, are the malnourished themselves, or the communities from which they come, who do not seem to have a clear voice in Zambia's nutrition policy process, and therefore find themselves without power. The amount of political accountability owed to this group in the NetMap makes them potentially powerful actors if they could be mobilised, however, and citizen power is perhaps present in the way that politicians adhere to food security goals and programmes given their presumed electoral appeal. This is in contrast with the nutrition coalition which has not engaged with communities; work for a related project with communities in Mumbwa district found low expectations of government services related to nutrition, little existing accountability to local communities, and little altered experience of multi-sectoral services in these communities in recent years since the multi-sectoral stunting narrative emerged in policy circles (Harris, Drimie et al. 2017). Appealing to and explicitly including this broad community constituency – whether framed as the electorate, citizens, or the malnourished – and including their own understandings and ideas of what is required to reduce hunger and malnutrition in their communities, might present options that neither coalition had considered, and that might present opportunities for the coalitions to find common ground.

The 'closedness' of a policy network has been found in multiple contexts, including some in Africa, to be inversely related to goal achievement (Forrest 2003); ideally, policy networks – such as the one comprising Zambia's nutrition policy sub-system – broaden the policy process, extending debates in a participatory direction to increase understanding of policy issues and improve accountability for the outcomes of policies. An understanding of aid and development processes from a recipient perspective can bring insight that is often lacking in the policy process, and this lack can hamper achievement of stated development goals (Anderson, Brown et al. 2012). Equally, however, even invited citizens can be excluded from policy discussions through the use of technical language and forms of knowledge with which they don't identify (Forrest 2003). Community voices are largely lacking in Zambia's nutrition policy process according to respondents in this research; while the advocacy organization CSOSUN is an umbrella group for smaller nutrition CBOs, it was clear during a two-day meeting to create CSOSUN's strategy in 2015 that these smaller CBOs saw CSOSUN as a route to access international funds to implement discrete projects, rather than as a conduit for bringing community voices into national debates around malnutrition, and no other groups linked to communities are included in the nutrition policy sub-system. Thus citizens at risk of hunger and

malnutrition find themselves excluded from nutrition policy discussions, uninvited and largely unrepresented at negotiations, and likely unaware of the very existence of these debates.

Power in the Zambian nutrition policy process therefore relates to the power of international epistemic communities, such as the group promoting a focus on stunting reduction, to intervene in national policy processes through the changing of normative frames; the power of entrenched coalitions, such as the food security coalition, to maintain dominant positions through bureaucratic inertia and appeals to the electorate; and the lack of power of constituencies directly affected by nutrition policy, such as the hungry and malnourished themselves, to participate in changing policy framing and shape policy according to their own interpretations and experiences, alongside expert views. Currently, both hunger and stunting numbers are unacceptably high in Zambia. The food security coalition dominates the nutrition sub-system in practice, but the stunting coalition believes that nutrition policy should be modified, and are intervening in the national policy process accordingly. Epistemic and normative power – such as that wielded by the international stunting epistemic community in framing their view of nutrition policy – are often assumed to grant legitimate right to international networks intervening in national policy processes through claim to expertise (Shiffman 2014), but the analysis above raises questions about the legitimacy of international expert groups holding more power over national policy than citizens affected by these policies. Claims to legitimate intervention in the national policy process by international groups therefore require further investigation (Shiffman, Schmitz et al. 2016), particularly in developing country contexts where power imbalances between policy actors can be high, and where the forms of power providing for participation in policy processes are largely hidden and invisible. The section below assesses the legitimacy of international influence in the Zambian nutrition policy process.

7.2 Morality and politics: legitimacy of transnational influence

The intervention of international groups in national policy, and their multiple roles and sources of power as shown above, raise the issue of legitimacy, concerning the right of a group to be recognised (Habermas 1979) and to be obeyed (Weber 1922). Legitimacy takes several forms conceptually, including input legitimacy (fair political process); output legitimacy (performance on an issue); and normative legitimacy (shaping of discourse to legitimize or de-legitimize certain actions), each of which is addressed below. Questioning by what authority global networks exert their power is particularly pertinent at a time when many international

coalitions are moving beyond traditional advocacy and guidance, and towards direct participation in national policy and institutional change (Collingwood and Logister 2005, Shiffman, Schmitz et al. 2016). In Zambia, this has meant direct intervention into shaping priorities in nutrition policy formulation; the promotion of narratives in support of addressing stunting through multi-sectoral approaches and marginalizing the need to address hunger; and the funding of nutrition programmes while advocating for the removal of current food security policies.

Classical political theory identifies legitimacy as resting largely on common identity and democratic procedures, but more recent international relations and public policy work has looked specifically at the legitimacy of global governance beyond the nation state, and the role of discourse in creating legitimacy for international organizations (Steffek 2003, Shiffman, Schmitz et al. 2016). Political ideas of common identity suggest that certain persons are entitled to act on behalf of others due to common history, ethnicity or destiny; this often manifests in practice as national identity, with the only governance considered legitimate being self-governance of a (national) community (Steffek 2003). In Zambia, this plays out in the rhetoric of 'one nation, one Zambia', espoused by the first president Kaunda after independence to bring together the disparate groups and ethnicities thrown together as a country under colonial boundary demarcation. 'One nation, one Zambia' is still the hallmark of Zambian political rhetoric today, and has been a factor in Zambia's lack of overt ethnic conflict since independence, though in reality Zambian politics is still marked by strong but generally peaceful ethnic, linguistic and regional divisions among distinct groups.

Building on the concept of common identity, the idea of democratic participation as a basis for legitimacy derives from Locke's notion of a political community established by contract between free and equal individuals; defining legitimacy as political participation and accountability exchanges common (national) identity for common (political) purpose (Steffek 2003). After a strong democratic start in the wake of independence, followed by a shakier period of 'single-party democracy', Zambia has held generally free and fair multi-party elections regularly since 1991; these have been characterised by peaceful transitions of power, if marred by low turnout and appeals to ethnic divisions to win votes (Posner 2005). Bringing identity and democracy together, in Zambian constitutional law only a third-generation Zambian or later may be elected President; ostensibly this is for reasons of national unity, though this clause only becomes invoked in political disputes over succession, infamously

between presidents Chiluba and Kaunda in the 1996 election, and more recently to bar second-generation (and white) acting president Guy Scott from standing in the 2015 election on the death in office of president Michael Sata.

Thus the Zambian state since independence can be seen purposefully to have built political legitimacy to a large extent on the classical dimensions of identity and democracy, despite some ongoing political challenges in the 50-year-old country. These notions of fair (political) process have been termed 'input legitimacy' by democratic theorists; key elements of input legitimacy besides fair process are inclusive deliberation and transparency (Dahl 1971, Daniels 2000, Schmidt 2013, all in Shiffman, Schmitz et al. 2016). If democracy is shorthand for inclusive deliberation whereby all ostensibly have a say in how the country is run through the process of voting, transparency fares less well in Zambia, with concentration of power at the central level and subsequent patronage networks and nepotism cited as sources of the corruption common in Zambian politics³⁹. More specific to nutrition, the 2009 health funding corruption scandal (Usher 2010) and the lack of inclusive deliberation in nutrition policy formulation mean that the state does not fare well for political input legitimacy in this particular sub-sector.

More commonly on specific issues however, state legitimacy is judged as output legitimacy: its performance in bringing expertise, resources or improved outcomes. Nutrition expertise in Zambian technical departments has historically been limited by lack of available high-level education and training, with low technical capacity frequently cited as a drag on nutrition action. Few national resources are committed to nutrition projects beyond core funding to the NFNC and health sector more broadly, with even established nutrition programmes such as vitamin A supplementation campaigns supported by the UN and donors. And both hunger and malnutrition outcomes, while slowly improving by some metrics, are generally poor compared to international standards and regional averages. The output legitimacy of the state for nutrition is therefore also low. The state is often conceptualized by development actors as a largely benign implementing machinery for policy (Ferguson 1994) but this assessment of state legitimacy with the lens of nutrition shows that the state is neither benign nor in many cases implementing much for nutrition in Zambia.

³⁹ Transparency International (accessed October 2015): <http://www.transparency.org/country/#ZMB>

Beyond state legitimacy however, how are we to understand the legitimacy of supra-national organizations such as UN agencies, which by definition are made up of peoples from disparate cultural backgrounds (notwithstanding shared identity and values relating to UN goals), and who are not democratically elected in the countries in which they act? Further, how are we to understand the legitimacy of the national organizations of third countries, such as bilateral donor organizations or international NGOs, which participate in policy processes in Zambia? Steffek (2003) suggests that the dominance of the state over citizens (which by definition is generally involuntary, by birth) is very different to dominance of multilateral institutions over states, due to the generally voluntary nature of entering into relationships with the UN or with NGOs; the generally circumscribed issue areas with which international organizations engage; and the different instruments used to gain assent. The voluntary nature of engagement however assumes rational and equal and free entry into relationships, which as has been shown in the chapters above is not always the case, with stronger technical knowledge, institutional influence, and resource mobilisation available to many international organisations than to national governments, and valid forms of knowledge and debate limited by the shaping of discourse.

Reasons to consider the advocacy networks to which these international groups belong as legitimate include their technical expertise and the focus of new voices and resources on neglected issues of public interest (Shiffman, Schmitz et al. 2016), thus predominantly through performance or output legitimacy. International organizations have certainly brought expertise to the issue of nutrition in Zambia, through the generation and promotion of evidence; provision of technical assistance to policy and governance; and in the case of NGOs, implementation of projects and learning from these. Even more notable has been the inpouring of resources for nutrition, particularly those coordinated through the SUN Fund, which has allowed nutrition programmes to start (albeit on a small-scale or pilot level) where few existed before. What the coalition has not yet been able to show is improved nutrition outcomes, even in dedicated pilot projects undertaken in Zambia (Kumar, Nguyen et al. forthcoming), and in fact has yet to show that its preferred approach of multi-sectoral action will yield improved outcomes, either internationally or in Zambia, though certainly the logical basis is still intact, and studies are ongoing in multiple fields.

Reasons to question the legitimacy of global health networks include their often elite composition and lack of representation of constituencies affected by policy decisions; the

fragmentation they can bring to global issues; their lack of challenge to existing power bases; and over-reliance on external donor resources (Shiffman, Schmitz et al. 2016). Thus many of the reasons to question the legitimacy of these networks fall under input or political legitimacy of these groups in national contexts. In Zambia, the international groups that in the main constitute the nutrition coalition are elite in composition, comprising technical experts privileging certain forms of knowledge; decision making is undertaken behind closed doors, with debates generally technical in nature. While this expertise is important and brings valuable insight from certain perspectives, it is however only part of a possible solution, and is limited by the forms of knowledge held as valid in the epistemic communities which comprise the networks. Communities such as the poor or malnourished are invoked by international groups in taking certain policy positions, particularly by NGOs with their presumed interaction with communities, and the UN and donors in advocating policies that they feel would be pro-poor. In practice however there is little participation of citizens or the malnourished and their framings in policy debates, and the NetMap and power analysis above reveal little influence of these groups, and nothing in the way of claimed or invited spaces of power for citizens.

Steffek (2003) based on the work of Weber (1922) and Habermas (1979) suggests a distinction between legitimacy and compliance which is useful for this analysis, both of which manifest in conformity and ostensible acceptance of rules or commands but through different mechanisms. In his reading, compliance may be brought about through prudent reaction to coercion or fear, or through rational calculation of costs and benefits; whereas legitimacy only exists through the belief and acceptance of a set of norms, therefore legitimacy only exists if people are freely accepting rules, commands or decisions because they regard them as (morally) binding, fair, and proper. This distinction, between compliance and legitimacy, brings us to normative legitimacy, a final category of legitimacy to add to input and output, based in the discourse of what is acceptable for different groups. Normative legitimacy is produced as coalitions shape the policy discourse according to their beliefs and interests, and certain actions become legitimized – and others de-legitimized – in the process (Brock, Cornwall et al. 2001). In Zambian nutrition policy discourse, the technical stunting agenda is confronting the dominant food security agenda, and its strategies include engaging with and logically dismantling the discourse of rival coalitions, such as the notion of calorie production as sufficient to address malnutrition.

In the case of nutrition policy in Zambia therefore, there is an obvious dearth of national action given the scale of malnutrition in the country; a lack of government funding to tackle high stunting numbers; and a lack of effectiveness of current food security programmes to tackle hunger, which the international stunting coalition has taken as its mandate for action. But the international community has not built political legitimacy to back up its moral claim, and while it does bring important expertise and resources to bear on the issue, has taken a wholly technical stance while ignoring the inclusion of constituencies such as the malnourished themselves, and the different actions that their framings of the issue might promote. Daniels (2000) suggests that what is needed to raise the legitimacy of decision making in health systems more broadly is not just fair outcomes, but also fair process which is transparent in its bases and procedures, inclusive of multiple stakeholders in challenging decisions, and empirically feasible in a given institutional setting. The international nutrition community has a central role in national nutrition policy processes in Zambia, but neither they nor their national counterparts in the nutrition coalition have so far brought the malnourished or their representatives into nutrition policy debates, preferring instead of political inclusion to work at a level of elite technical organization that conforms to socialized beliefs about how nutrition should be addressed.

Stunting is an important issue in Zambia, but hunger is the lived experience of many Zambians, so a strategy that focuses on both is needed if output legitimacy is to be maintained, not a logical dismantling of one to address the other. Moreover, the complete lack of involvement of communities or citizens in nutrition policy processes in Zambia is a weakness of the policy process led by international groups, reducing their input legitimacy. Without attention to normative legitimacy (and popular and political support) outside of the narrow nutrition policy network, the nutrition coalition has struggled to engage with the food security coalition and so the split between hunger and stunting agendas is maintained. If power and legitimacy remain unaddressed issues in the nutrition community both internationally and in Zambia, and reductions in hunger and malnutrition have been stalled in part because of this blind-spot, then addressing these explicitly could be fruitful. What is missing in nutrition policy processes in Zambia is participation and representation of the malnourished themselves in policy debates; they have no power, and those who claim to be working in their name have no direct accountability to them, and this gap in turn limits their legitimacy: a no-win situation. Input legitimacy is improved through participation, and one way to bring a more inclusive process, more accountability to citizens, and more legitimacy to the international

organizations working on nutrition would therefore be for the actors working in this field to bring a focus on the nutrition rights of populations, explored below.

7.3 *Rising SUN: a role for rights?*

Urban Jonsson's 2010 historical assessment of international nutrition, reviewed in chapter 3, speculated that two contemporary international nutrition paradigms were in competition: the 'investment in nutrition paradigm', proposing that allocating more money to technical nutrition interventions to scale up service provision to larger populations would speed improvements in malnutrition outcomes; and the 'human rights approach to nutrition paradigm', proposing that political action towards greater entitlements to and accountability for good nutrition would be required to catalyse improvements in both process and outcomes. He further claimed that this dichotomy was unique in the history of nutrition because the two paradigms both claim to draw from the same evidence base, and the differences between the paradigms *'instead lie in different ethical and ideological principles embedded in the two paradigms... The Investment Paradigm is seen as too technical by some; while the Human Rights Paradigm is seen as too political by others. It is therefore likely that the factors that ultimately will determine which of the two will be the next 'mainstream' paradigm in applied nutrition are based more on power politics and ideology than based on new scientific discoveries'* (Jonsson 2010, pp.153). Seven years later, it is abundantly clear that the investment paradigm is dominant, with a plethora of new investment-focussed initiatives announced and ongoing⁴⁰. In international-level interviews conducted for this study, investment approaches and rationales for action were explicitly mentioned thirty-five times by nine respondents, as opposed to rights approaches and rationales which were mentioned three times by one respondent⁴¹ (for instance as *"the completely obvious human rights argument that should trump everything else and often doesn't"*).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 as a common standard setting out fundamental human rights to be universally protected. Subsequently, these rights were refined and defined over

⁴⁰ For instance Feed the Future 2010; New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition 2012; Nutrition for Growth 2013; SUN Business Network 2013

⁴¹ Word search within interviews: invest OR economic OR financial vs. rights OR ethic

time, with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopted in 1990. While these three covenants are most specifically relevant to nutrition⁴², no international human rights covenant explicitly recognizes the right to good nutrition, though it is implicit in definitions of the right to food, health and care as phrased (Jonsson 1996). These covenants were intentionally broad in the range of participants involved in their creation, with many traditions represented in the drafting of particularly the UDHR, which had no country opposition but eight abstentions in its ratification in 1948, and a large majority of countries have also ratified each of the other conventions (though notably not the USA)⁴³. Thus human rights frameworks remain a normative basis for much of international law and are promoted as universal to all peoples and nations (Donnelly 2013), though this universality is debated (see below).

Based upon the framework of international human rights law and the values that underpin it, the core principles of a rights-based approach in practice are participation, accountability and non-discrimination (de Schutter 2012). A human rights framework in policy therefore means that results and targets are the product of meaningful participation; authorities responsible for implementation are held accountable for results; and indicators are based on these normative components of process and outcome, with proper monitoring of both (de Schutter 2012). To achieve these, in any rights-based system there are three major elements: individual rights holders and their rights; duty bearers and their obligations; and agents of accountability (Kent 2006). Generally, the duty-bearer is the state, the rights-holders are citizens, and the agents of accountability are civil society organizations. State obligations under human rights approaches are to respect rights, to protect rights, and to fulfil or facilitate rights; the role of government is to pass laws and policies to this effect, while the role of civil society and citizens is to demand these, and hold government to account (de Schutter 2012). The major change towards a rights-based programme would therefore require converting the

⁴² Article 25 of the UDHR states a right to 'a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care'; Article 11 of the ICESCR reaffirms this right, adding the right to freedom from hunger, the right to make use of scientific knowledge for agriculture, and the equitable distribution of food, while article 12 recognizes the right to health ; general comment 12 of the ICESCR states 'The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has the physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement'; and article 24 of the CRC calls for combating disease and malnutrition through the right to food, basic health services and adequate care.

⁴³ UN status of ratification interactive dashboard: <http://indicators.ohchr.org/>

statement of the goals of bureaucracy to formulations of entitlements of individual participants or citizens; informing those entitled about their entitlements and how to claim them; and supporting government in its capacity to respond to claims and civil society in its capacity to monitor these (Kent 2006). Thus there are clear frameworks for reformulating policy with a human rights lens and therefore enhancing participation and accountability (those elements found lacking in the Zambian nutrition policy process above), but still this process is acknowledged as difficult, with institutional inertia and dominant power structures geared around the status quo, thus much writing on rights-based approaches advocates for their progressive realization rather than immediate wholesale change.

Uvin (2002) proposes three different ways in which rights might be incorporated into development policy in practice: the incorporation of human rights *terminology and language* into standard development discourse, which does not challenge existing patterns of working but rather adds a notion of validation through claim of the moral high ground; the addition of human rights *objectives* to existing goals, allowing for the establishment of discrete programs with ostensibly political aims, such as ‘good governance’; or the *redefinition* of development mandates in human rights terms, allowing for a fundamental re-thinking of how development can work, as development outcomes are claimed as a right rather than provided through charity. He further notes that much human rights work in development so far broadly falls into the category of ‘rhetorical re-packaging’ rather than real change to actions and agendas in practice.

Much of the discussion of a right to nutrition in international development debates has been incorporated into a discussion of the right to food – defined as the ability of people to feed themselves with dignity with foods that are available, accessible and adequate – and more recently into the concept of ‘food security and nutrition’ (de Schutter 2012). Indeed, a rights-based approach would emphasise the indivisibility of food security and nutrition (contrary to the split in advocacy coalitions found in the Zambian policy process above), with adequate nutrition unachievable without food, and a major role of food being to provide nutrition (Valente 2014). The meaning of the right to food has been debated since it was first mooted in 1948, in concert with changing societal norms, with conflicts between a neoliberal paradigm (which has tended to reduce the right to food to the right to enough calories through markets or aid), and social movements resisting this framing (which have tended to broaden the right to food to the right to human wellbeing more generally) (Valente 2014).

Literature specifically discussing the right to nutrition emerged at around the same time that the broader development community were enshrining the idea of children's rights in conventions in the 1990s (Kent 1993, Kent 1994, Jonsson 1999, Robinson 1999), though with some exceptions (Oshaug, Eide et al. 1994) this work was largely normative rather than empirical in nature, calling for more attention to these approaches rather than illustrating how this had been achieved or understood in different contexts. Countries embracing a human rights approach to food and nutrition, including some in Africa, have started to change how these issues are approached, towards a focus on legal entitlements rather than provision through markets or charity, and therefore on state obligations to respect (not obstruct existing access to adequate food); to protect (not deprive individuals of access to adequate food); and to fulfil or facilitate (pro-active engagement to strengthen access to adequate food, including direct provision to the most vulnerable populations) (de Schutter 2012). The idea of human rights in nutrition therefore is not new, and the language of nutrition rights is notably present in key international strategies (including the SUN movement strategy, as a core guiding principle for action) and national policies (Zambia's nutrition policy cites a right to good nutrition as a motivation for action). The potential of a 'right to nutrition' approach to nutrition policy to address some of the issues uncovered in the findings of this research, in both international and Zambian contexts, is therefore explored below, applying the theoretical ideas present in most right-to-nutrition literature to date, to the empirical findings in this study.

7.3.1 A rights focus in the SUN movement

The Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) movement is currently the most internationally prominent group promoting nutrition action globally. SUN is '*founded on the principle that all people have a right to food and good nutrition*'⁴⁴, calls for '*nutrition justice for all*', and has a rights-based approach noted in its original Principles of Engagement⁴⁵ and its newer strategy (SUN 2016). SUN therefore claims a rights focus within its work. Looking at the intentions and actions of SUN through a critical lens however, it could be said that SUN's application of rights-based approaches is at the level of rhetoric, rather than underpinning action (Uvin 2002), as

⁴⁴ SUN overview: <http://scalingupnutrition.org/about>

⁴⁵ The Principles call for signatories to be "transparent, inclusive, rights-based, willing to negotiate, mutually accountable, cost-effective, and communicative". http://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Principles%20of%20Engagement_04_20150619_ENG.pdf

discussed below. Action to promote rights-based approaches broadly requires both building understanding, empowerment and capacity of citizens to make claims against their rights, and strengthening capacity of state and non-state duty-holders to respond to those claims (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004). So far, SUN has focused on one part of one side of this dyad of action: on strengthening national policy, and national accountability to international goals. There has been little talk of the accountability of either government or non-state actors to the malnourished themselves, who are still framed as ‘beneficiaries’ rather than participants in most international development projects.

There is also little in SUN’s published strategic actions that suggests the movement is promoting action to generate demand for good nutrition as a right, nor for other social justice aims underpinning access to good nutrition at the basic level; even its own Social Mobilization Practice Note (SUN 2014) focusses on bringing in high-level champions rather than citizen action, and talk of social mobilization itself is limited to raising demand for services rather than rights. In an online consultation on the SUN movement, involving nutrition policy and programme actors from countries signed up to SUN in 2012, concern was raised that much focus of advocacy and awareness-raising was at national levels, to improve written policy environments and in some cases project implementation, but that community or grassroots participation and any real focus on rights was lacking (Gillespie, Haddad et al. 2013, web appendix). Similarly in the commissioned 2015 external evaluation of SUN it was noted (among many positive comments) that some *‘see SUN as not taking a sufficiently rights-based approach, [and] ignoring the underlying food system causes of hunger and malnutrition’* (Mokoro 2015, pp.585).

The SUN movement was created in part with an aim to bring coherence to the UN network’s country support for nutrition (where the Standing Committee on Nutrition was tasked with internal UN coordination on nutrition internationally). Subsequent to SUN’s creation, the 2015 United Nations Global Nutrition Agenda⁴⁶ elaborated further on the role of the UN system in eradicating malnutrition. The document notes that the UN’s core principle number seven (of ten) on nutrition is that *‘the UN is steered by a Human Rights-Based approach to nutrition’*, and annexes list various conventions initiated by the UN covering

⁴⁶ UN Global Nutrition Agenda 2015:
<http://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/UN-Global-Nutrition-Agenda-2015.pdf>

aspects of the right to food or nutrition, and the mandates of several UN agencies as pertaining to rights. The core of the document however, the strategic priorities of the UN on nutrition, are based on a review of existing country commitments, therefore based on what is already being done or signed up to: that nutrition is embedded in policies and governance systems at all levels; that adequate (capacity and resource) support systems are in place; and that quality programmes are implemented at scale. Rights are therefore mentioned in the UN's core principles, but disappear in the actual strategies outlined in the document; as with SUN, rights remain at the level of rhetoric rather than action for nutrition in the UN system for now.

SUN's other major operating principle is that it is country-led, where *'in effect, each of the SUN countries contains their own national Movements, which are joining forces with others on a global scale for joint advocacy and mutual support... designed for an evolving world, in which solutions were not imposed, but based on partnership'* (SUN 2012, pp.13). However well-intentioned, this framing ignores the power relations inherent between national governments in low-income countries and their related development donors, experts and professionals, and the primacy of certain forms of knowledge – manifesting as evidence and indicators and management processes – which do not allow for very broad interpretations of what is to be done in practice (Escobar 1995), and which do not, for instance, tend to measure participation of or accountability to citizens. Terms such as shared or country ownership, or partnership, are often little more than buzzwords in development, used either cynically or unintentionally to obscure inequalities of power and depoliticise action (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004, Gaventa 2006). SUN as a movement has therefore been described in one report as *'a top-down UN-and-business-led initiative... [which] does not explicitly acknowledge the structural causes of all forms of malnutrition'* (Schuftan and Greiner 2013), despite its involvement of civil society organizations, its talk of being country-led, and its rhetoric of rights.

Conflicting philosophies, linguistic ambiguities, technical framings, and powerful interests and beliefs all play out in the microcosm of SUN, just as they do in the macrocosm of international nutrition: a disjuncture between a rhetoric of rights compared to technically-framed activities (in the UN in general and SUN in particular, when it comes to nutrition) has been highlighted by members and critics alike as a key point of conflict, particularly as the SUN movement tries to incorporate all sides of the nutrition world, from state governments to civil society to business. There is strategic ambiguity in the use of rights-based language by SUN, with lack of definition keeping multiple practical options open, and thereby keeping actors

from different sectors on board, even if contrary actions are being proposed. Being all things to all people is not necessarily driving an innovative agenda in the SUN movement; rather dominant narratives define where power lies, which is often not in the communities or even the countries where malnutrition is a significant problem. As Jonsson (2010) noted with regards to nutrition, one reason for the anticipated domination of the technically-focussed investment paradigm over the politically-focussed rights paradigm is that an investment focus explicitly avoids the sensitive social and political causes and consequences of malnutrition and the balance of power between different beliefs and interests which maintain these, both within countries and on a global scale. In the perspective of the anthropology of development literature therefore, the SUN movement – in trying to bring disparate actors together and be all things to all people – is reproducing the same apolitical, all-encompassing discourses of traditional international nutrition, and is so far unclear of its niche in terms of a movement that includes the right to good nutrition by which the movement itself claims to be motivated.

7.3.2 Right to nutrition in Zambia

Several African countries (Kenya and South Africa in particular) have adopted rights based approaches to food and nutrition, following examples in Latin America and India, and Zambia has been identified as a country with the potential to follow suit due to its ongoing constitutional reforms (de Schutter 2012). Alongside the 2016 Zambian parliamentary election was a referendum on changes to the current 1991 constitution, and within this amendment were specific clauses related to nutrition. The 1991 Zambian Constitution did not recognize the right to food or nutrition either explicitly or implicitly. In 2000 Zambia, along with all but three countries in the world, ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes provisions on nutrition; and in 2004 as a member state of the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Zambia adopted the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security (FIAN International 2014). These international conventions form a normative basis for policy, and subsequently the 2006 Zambian National Food and Nutrition Policy states in its guiding principles that *‘equity of access to food and nutrition is a basic human right’* and *‘citizens have a right to adequate and safe food supply’*, while the 2016 National Agriculture Policy’s first guiding principle is *‘the right to adequate and nutritious food’*. To bind these disparate policy assertions into a national framework for the country, in 2016 the revised Zambian constitution put to referendum contained relevant amendments: Article 39 (1e) proposed that *‘A person*

has the right, as prescribed, to food of an acceptable standard'; other rights under article 39 included rights to health care services, safe water, decent sanitation, and social protection. Article 48 (5d) additionally proposed that '*A child is further entitled to ... adequate nutrition*', as well as shelter, basic health services, social protection and social services. Thus Zambia's constitution, if the amendment passed, would show strong legal support for both a right to food and a right to adequate nutrition, as already stated in various national policies. The amendment needed the support 50 percent +1 of the eligible voting public in the referendum; despite over 70 percent of those voting backing the constitutional amendment, voter turnout was only 44 percent, thus the constitutional amendment and the right to food and nutrition were not passed in 2016, though constitutional reform is ongoing. In addition, despite the international conventions, policy statements, and proposed constitution wording, it is also not completely clear that the Zambian government backs these rights: in 2014 the former vice president Dr Guy Scott (formerly of the ruling PF party) commented that the "*government is strongly opposed to enacting ideological fantasies from the draft constitution such as the right to food, because they are unrealistic and inapplicable*"⁴⁷. Thus there is no current legal basis for or enactment of the right to food or nutrition in Zambia, though policy rhetoric increasingly supports it.

7.3.3 Taking forward a right to nutrition: can we?

If major limitations of the nutrition policy process in Zambia found in this work are the disproportionate power of global epistemic communities intervening in national policy, a de-linking of hunger and malnutrition discourse, and a lack of participation and voice of citizens; then a rights-based approach to nutrition is an approach which seeks explicitly to address these through a focus on participation and accountability, and the indivisibility of the rights to food and nutrition. The power analysis above suggests that nationally in Zambia, communities experiencing hunger and malnutrition are not explicitly participating in the nutrition policy process with either coalition within the nutrition policy sub-system, thus their voices and preferences are not heard and their rights are not being met. Incorporating a right to nutrition as a policy approach explicitly focuses on participation of marginalized groups within the policy process, but also goes further towards a focus on claims and accountability. As shown in the discussion of food security and nutrition policy in previous chapters, many outside of the

⁴⁷ FIAN: http://www.fian.org/fr/actualites/article/right_to_food_in_zambia_awaits_for_national_recognition/

nutrition community would fail to see the difference between the right to food and the right to nutrition. But while the international nutrition community has worked hard to maintain the conceptual distinction between hunger and malnutrition in order to put nutrition on the global agenda and overcome the dominant narrative of increased yields and calorie production, a rights-based approach would suggest that in practical (rather than academic) terms, the two are indivisible and should therefore be addressed together. Taking the focus away from maintaining strict conceptual separation, and recognising the common basic causes of both hunger and malnutrition, such as power imbalances throughout politics and economics, might allow for a *rapprochement* between coalitions working on hunger and nutrition in Zambia.

While a human rights approach is essentially a normative approach to policy, based on covenants negotiated by country representatives at the UN, there has nevertheless been some empirical research on how these approaches might be operationalized, and their impacts in practice. An early review of what a rights-based approach might mean for nutrition policy research, drawing on work on rights in broader development research, found that government adherence to political and civil rights in general does not impede and may improve economic growth, and has positive impact on child nutrition through this route; that citizen participation in policy debates may improve nutrition-related outcomes, for instance through sensitive design of public works programmes; and that rights claims can be a powerful lever to improve gender equality (Haddad and Oshaug 1998). These authors also cautioned that beyond participation in policy design, citizen participation in research design is necessary, as research often influences policy. Working from a different epistemological perspective, Goetz and Gaventa (2001) examined the effectiveness of policy initiatives that seek to increase citizens' voice and public sector responsiveness in delivery of services, finding through a review of sixty case studies that meaningful participation requires formal recognition for citizens groups, their right to information about decision-making and spending, and rights to seek redress for poor services. Advocacy initiatives for nutrition have also been reviewed, finding that the engagement of society at large has received little attention in either research or interventions, with communities largely seen as targets or objects of behaviour change communication campaigns rather than change agents in their own right, and little nutrition work has focussed on power claimed through grassroots mobilization or confrontation (Pelletier, Haider et al. 2013, te Lintelo, Nisbett et al. forthcoming). To promote practical action, there are also tools

for designing a rights-based approach to food and nutrition, such as decision matrices (Oshaug, Eide et al. 1994) and checklists of key concepts such as the PANTHER principles⁴⁸.

Much of what has been written in modern policy process research on nutrition already speaks to a rights-based approach: There is work calling for (or assessing) accountability, equitable targeting, and government commitment in the existing nutrition literature. Several food and nutrition programmes internationally have applied a selection of rights principles by, for example, targeting the most nutritionally-vulnerable groups, analysing the underlying causes of hunger, developing policies and strategies that speak to the right to food, promoting participation and empowerment, and undertaking rights-focused evaluations (FAO 2012). It has been suggested however that other critical elements of rights-based approaches are frequently overlooked in practice, particularly understanding stakeholders' roles and obligations, integrating legal aspects into programmes, incorporating rights into monitoring systems, and integrating recourse and claims mechanisms into accountability programmes (FAO 2012). What remains – if a human rights based approach is required – is to complete the circle, structuring these pieces of the puzzle more squarely within existing human rights frameworks in order to acknowledge these as entitlements and duties rather than passive receipt of aid, and completing the list of factors that comprise a human rights framing, such as participation, and a focus on claims of rights holders and the capacity of duty-bearers to respond.

Given the presence of a rights focus in so many nutrition policies and strategies at multiple levels, a rights based approach has the potential to change how the issues of hunger and malnutrition are addressed: to improve the legitimacy of the nutrition policy process through increased citizen participation; to give power to communities experiencing hunger and malnutrition in shaping nutrition policy; to catalyse better synergy of process and outcomes in nutrition policy; to reconcile the hunger and nutrition narratives by addressing the basic

⁴⁸ FAO PANTHER principles 2006:

<http://www.fao.org/righttofood/about-right-to-food/human-right-principles-panther/en/>

Participation requires that everyone have the right to subscribe to decisions that affect them

Accountability of governments through elections, judicial procedures or other mechanisms

Non-discrimination prohibits arbitrary differences of treatment in decision-making

Transparency requires that people be able to know processes, decisions and outcomes

Human dignity requires that people be treated in a dignified way

Empowerment requires that they are in a position to exert control over decisions affecting their lives

Rule of law requires that every member of society, including decision-makers, must comply with the law

causes of both issues, and rooting policy agendas in the contexts in which both hunger and malnutrition persist; and therefore to gain efficiency of the policy process and potentially better outcomes (de Schutter 2012). A rights-based approach therefore offers policy tools for bringing participation to the nutrition policy process, incorporating framings from those experiencing hunger and malnutrition in their every-day lives, to both improve the legitimacy of the process, and improve outcomes through linking approaches to hunger and malnutrition again. This approach however is not a silver bullet: is difficult to apply; is critiqued conceptually and philosophically from various quarters; and may not be the chosen approach of those experiencing the conditions of hunger and malnutrition. While the section above has shown that a rights-based approach to nutrition *can* be pursued, and suggests how it might be, the section below summarises some of the critiques to rights-based approaches, and asks: *should* a rights-based approach be pursued?

7.3.4 Taking forward a right to nutrition: Should we?

The philosophical understanding of human rights derives from multiple disciplines (including law, politics, sociology and theology) that in general are based in Enlightenment principles and therefore a largely Western interpretation of the world. Human rights can be understood from a number of perspectives, including as natural entitlements deriving from fundamental moral law; as a deliberative concept attempting to establish mutual co-existence of societies; as a way of redressing injustices through protest; and as a discursive concept relating to the promotion of global power (Chrichton, Haider et al. 2015). Human rights have been described as an ethos, a set of principles, an aspiration and a demand for human dignity and equity, promoted and guaranteed; and also as a framework to analyse social processes and abuse of power (Valente 2014). Inevitably within these multiple perspectives and interpretations, there is criticism of imposing normative standards upon distinct cultures, largely arising from the anthropological literature which has highlighted differing cultural norms and perceptions outside of the culture that gave rise to the UN and its rights declarations (Engle 2001). Ongoing academic debate centres on the universality of human rights principles, and in particular the focus on individual rather than collective rights (Morsink 1999, Ignatieff 2001, UNDPI 2008, Cox and Yoo 2009, O'Connor 2014). As Ignatieff (2001, pp.102) writes in summarizing these critiques, *'Since 1945, human rights language has become a source of power and authority. Inevitably, power invites challenge'*.

It has been suggested that the way to make human rights culturally legitimate in practice is to tailor their practical application to cultural contexts, rather than change their underlying values of protecting human dignity (Chrichton, Haider et al. 2015). In addition to the philosophical and normative work reviewed above, some empirical work has therefore been undertaken to understand how the concept of human rights is understood or internalised by different groups affected by it. With a specific focus on the right to food, Hossain, te Lintelo et al. (2015) asked individuals in communities experiencing hunger and malnutrition what this right meant in their everyday lives, finding that while ideas of the right to food did not generally use international human rights language, an understanding of innate or natural rights to food was 'common sense', shared across contexts and groups, and part of how people negotiate their right to food in everyday life. Without a focus on nutrition but conducting research with NGOs promoting – respectively – rights-based, religious, or political approaches to advocacy and intervention on different issues, Miller (2017) finds that religious NGOs tended to prefer the moral structure of their religion (encompassing dignity but also responsibilities) to the idea of rights, and noted the lack of completeness of the value system of a rights-based approach. Political NGOs tended to be frustrated by the lack of operationalization of rights under legal systems, and so the lack of power or effectiveness of a rights-based approach. For both groups, the language of rights was employed tactically or pragmatically when specific campaigns would be enhanced by it, suggesting an instrumental rather than fundamental use of rights-based approaches.

Human rights in many cases have therefore become another buzzword that actors can frame according to their own agendas, using or applying the language of rights where it might add validation, rather than starting from a premise of rights. A reason for this lack of real incorporation of rights ideas into international development action is suggested by Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi (2004): A move from a focus on needs (provided by development assistance on a voluntary and discretionary charitable basis) to rights (with associated claims and obligations) requires accountability not only from governments to citizens, but also from international development organizations to their intended beneficiaries. The idea of such accountability was floated with the 'right to development' movement of the 1990s, but was an accountability step too far for donor agencies, which have accountability first to domestic taxpayers and governments (or in the case of private philanthropic organizations, to nobody), and was rejected. Where subsequent development policies of bilateral donors have discussed rights-based approaches, most have focussed on the accountability of national governments to

the poor, rather than of the international development community (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004).

Human rights are therefore just one framework for addressing failures in ensuring human dignity, and are a framework rooted in the culture that created the concept; it has even been suggested that human rights are a modern ‘worldwide secular religion’, with the UDHR founded explicitly on ‘faith’ in human rights (Ignatieff 2003, Féron 2014), with other faiths or perspectives perhaps equally valid in framing action. We can’t know, without asking, whether rights framings are those that would be chosen by those experiencing hunger and malnutrition, nor whether these issues would be the ones that communities themselves would choose to address; empowered individuals advocating for themselves might indeed decide that a right to nutrition is not a priority, as communities appear to have done in the well-informed but over-nourished West. While Hossain, te Lintelo et al. (2015) find that concepts of a right to food appear to be universal, despite different language being used and the reality of rights not always living up to the expectation, there is so far no empirical work asking about understandings of a right to nutrition among the malnourished or those who might be held up as duty-bearers for nutrition: a research agenda to be completed.

While we might assume that a combination of clear information on the risks of malnutrition and access to nutritious foods might lead to a focus on a right to nutrition, it may not, and there are questions for those working in international nutrition around the legitimacy of using epistemic power to ensure priority for nutrition where this is not chosen, and the role of such power compared to local knowledge and the preferences of the most disadvantaged. The important point is to acknowledge human rights as one framing among many that might be applied in addressing the injustices of hunger and malnutrition; as Féron (2014) cautions, the coercive propagation of rights risks degenerating into a form of self-contradictory fundamentalism, rather than a return to the values of dignity that rights are said to stand for. For nutrition advocates, the politics of this debate over rights-based approaches compared to others may be more important in practice than questions of religious philosophy (Freeman 2004), but if the debate is held, it might reflect on the different ways of taking forward an inclusive process for action on hunger and malnutrition, including but not limited to a focus on rights.

7.4 *Methodological reflections and implications*

This section reflects on the work that has been undertaken for this study, and on its implications: Implications for researchers include comment on the process of policy research for nutrition researchers hoping to undertake similar political work in future. Implications for practitioners include some ‘lessons learned’ for those engaged in nutrition practice, both internationally and in country contexts. The limitations of this study are laid out, and lead to a suggestion of several pieces of further work that would add to our understanding of nutrition policy processes.

7.4.1 Frameworks and theories: Implications for researchers

The start of this study, in 2011, coincided with a gradual increase in interest in policy process work among nutrition researchers, and over the duration of the study there has been more acknowledgement that political science research or a broader development studies perspective is necessary to improve understanding of these processes. There has also been some acknowledgement of the need to move beyond descriptive qualitative work (which is useful to individual countries but not necessarily generalizable) to bring a more comprehensive theoretical analysis that allows for generalization of concepts beyond the single case. The current study has explicitly applied two epistemologically and disciplinarily distinct approaches in order to address the former, analysing the data through both policy science and anthropological perspectives; and has used several theories – of discourse, of policy transfer, and of advocacy coalitions – to explain the findings and to translate the concepts underlying these findings into more generalizable propositions that can be applied elsewhere.

Many policy science theories pay only limited attention to the role of ideas and knowledge, or how these manifest as multiple concepts of power, and the mainstream policy process literature has struggled to combine the concepts of power and ideas (Cairney 2012); anthropology on the other hand has established approaches that can do this coherently, such as through Foucault’s work on knowledge as power, or governmentality as creating the normative conditions whereby populations govern their own conduct (Foucault 1975, Dean 2010). Critical approaches therefore bring a new lens to concepts that are central to policy process research; in turn, policy science approaches – through generalizable theory that aids understanding of why people and networks act as they do – allow us to move beyond constant critique of development systems, and forward with ideas about ways to improve practice. Despite their different epistemological foundations, these different approaches can be applied

in ways that complement rather than restrict how policy processes can be understood. The complementary approach to applying multiple theories (Cairney 2013) added huge insight in this study, and explained the phenomena being observed more fully than any single theory could do alone; while the anthropological approach to discourse was applied largely in the international analysis and the policy science theories of policy transfer and advocacy coalitions were applied largely to the national analysis, the combination of both allowed for a more multi-faceted treatment of power in the final analysis which added layers of interpretation to the study.

While the approaches applied are epistemologically distinct, each of these approaches acknowledges that different perspectives on a process are important in order to understand that process more fully, and this was a major convergence that allowed the theories to complement rather than conflict with each other. In order to take advantage of these synergies, the work had to be iterative and open to change: Throughout the process of the research, as multiple rounds of data collection and coding were undertaken and new ideas emerged, the research questions moved from normative (for instance, how can we do multisectoral work better?) to reflective and critical (for instance, how did multisectorality arrive on the agenda, and what are the implications?). At the same time, throughout the research process the analytical approach moved from deductive (based on the framework that initially defined the study) to inductive (with stories emerging from the data independent of the original framework). Finally, a broad reading of theoretical literature in both anthropological and policy science traditions allowed relevant theory to emerge once the empirical findings were clear, with theories of discourse, policy transfer and advocacy coalitions adequately explaining what was being seen in the data. An initial reflection for researchers undertaking policy process work for nutrition is therefore to trust the qualitative process from data collection through to theory application: eventually the empirical meets the theoretical; given sufficient time, rounds of data collection and analysis, and reading (enough iteration), the relevant theories suggest themselves.

That is not to say that discourse, policy transfer and the ACF were the only theories that were relevant to the empirical findings; there were, for instance, other political science theories that might have fit with an explanation of the policy transfer that was being observed, in addition to the ACF. Punctuated Equilibrium (Baumgartner and Jones 1993), for example, would see the food security coalition as an 'iron triangle' between government, agribusiness

and farmer groups, and the nutrition coalition as a challenger using current political events and knowledge framings to leverage change. This would imply a focus on the makeup of the food security group, rather than the nutrition group which was the actual focus of this work, but could have added even more insight to the findings. Similarly, many political scientists focus on interests rather than ideas to explain actor behaviour (Cairney 2012). In this work, ideas were inherent in part because of the lens applied through the critical anthropological approaches, but also it was ideas (and ideals) rather than interests that were claimed as their motivation by many working in development, both internationally and nationally. This is why ideas rather than interests came through in the empirical data, and therefore ideas and beliefs needed to be central in the choice of theory to interpret this, which they are in the ACF. However, investigation of the role of interests, particularly in the food security coalition, could also have added more insight to the findings.

The ACF itself has limitations, as acknowledged by its authors (Sabatier and Weible 2007): A critique that the ACF fails to address collective action problems is thought to be addressed through the use of network analysis, as has been applied in this study. An open question on the role of power in advocacy coalitions has also been addressed through the approach taken in this work. But there remain interesting unanswered questions that may well change with the context under study, such as: How inclusive and exclusive are coalitions? And, what is the relative importance of material self-interest compared with policy core beliefs in coalition formation and maintenance? While potentially limited by its focus on beliefs at the expense of interests and likely not a complete or final model of how policy processes proceed, the ACF was nonetheless a useful framework for explaining change in the Zambian nutrition policy process in combination with other theories. The application of the ACF in this work was not the approach in its strictest sense, for instance this work did not aim to produce ‘falsifiable hypotheses’ (Sabatier and Weible 2007) as this is not the epistemological approach of this research. Notwithstanding this important caveat, throughout this study each of the framework elements were assessed, and a particular focus was on elaborating the different levels of beliefs, the resources available, and the strategies applied by each coalition within the policy sub-system, which allowed for a useful understanding of nutrition policy maintenance and change in Zambia. If nutrition researchers wish to apply the ACF in future studies, they might initially look for different framings of similar issues by different groups in order to identify coalitions, and later at the different levels of beliefs among policy actors within each coalition, as well as the resources available and the strategies applied.

It is likely that these broad concepts – discourses, policy transfer, and advocacy coalitions – exist similarly in other low-income country contexts in which national nutrition policy is influenced by the international nutrition community. It is therefore likely that the application of these theories, and the exploration of issues around policy transfer, advocacy coalitions and issue framing, and power and knowledge would be useful in researching nutrition policy processes in other country contexts. The findings confirm discourse, policy transfer and the ACF as useful theories in understanding the policy process. They extend the work done so far on the political economy of nutrition by applying established theory from several disciplines, which has been called for but so far not undertaken in many studies. This is not to claim that these findings are ‘correct’, however; they are instead a valid interpretation of the available data in light of accepted theory. We can be confident in them because the stories emerged from the data, and fit with theory which has already been shown to explain aspects of the policy process in other sectors and settings. But as explored above, other theory may add yet more insight to the emerging findings.

7.4.2 Policy and practice: Implications for practitioners

The findings of this study – in particular the application of different discourses and buzzwords to shape agendas, the power of international epistemic communities in setting national policy, and the divergent framings of the same issue among different coalitions – are likely to be seen in other contexts, albeit with local nuance. Therefore as well as researchers being able to research these phenomena in different places, to refine our understanding of how these concepts play out, nutrition practitioners might find an awareness of these processes useful as they decide on what to do in practice about the issues of hunger and malnutrition. The idea of policy transfer – that ideas are transferred from one place or time to another by various mechanisms, and that the provenance of these ideas the destination context have implications for consequences (both intended and unintended) – is worth reflection, for instance. Similarly the presence of divergent advocacy coalitions challenges practitioners to be more aware of the different framings that exist of an issues, while the use of buzzword and the ‘rendering technical’ of issues might encourage more awareness of power and the multiple ways it manifests. Awareness of and reflection upon practice is a key theme here for practitioners, being aware that how powerful actors frame a problem dictates what is possible to do in order to address it.

Outcomes of these broad framing and power processes that are more specific to nutrition are the findings on the division of the hunger and malnutrition narratives in policy discourse, and the lack of participation of the hungry and malnourished themselves in framing policy responses. The sections above have suggested that a rights-based approach is one way that the various issues of participation, accountability and a split between hunger and nutrition discourses might be bridged; the broader point is for practitioners to be explicit about what these divisions mean for the outcomes of nutrition policy and practice, and the process of a divided and non-inclusive policy debate, and to reflect on whether there might be better ways to practice. Normative questions still remain, such as the extent to which hungry and malnourished non-experts can or should be involved in making policy, which can only be answered through debate and reflection. If it is felt that these voices should be represented, then a start is inviting and listening; the entire process doesn't need to be defined up-front, rather it needs to be flexible and inclusive enough that different viewpoints and issues can be meaningfully incorporated. Overall, if it is felt that fast enough headway is not being made on reducing hunger or malnutrition, then there is a need to be critical about what is done and why, and to challenge the nutrition community to reflect on their assumptions and actions.

7.4.3 Study limitations

As with any research, this study has its limitations, in addition to the methodological reflections above. First, that of generic issues found with much qualitative research due to its very nature, such as dependence on the skill of the researcher and her personal biases; difficulty demonstrating methodological rigour; and the potential for the researcher's presence to alter responses (Anderson 2010). I hope I have mitigated many of these through the methodological and ethical approaches described above.

Second, even in such a long and involved piece of research as this, there are always more potential avenues to explore, and more issues that emerge as the research progresses. Specifically in this research, increased focus on food systems and the private sector in shaping nutrition policy internationally and in Zambia would likely have been helpful in understanding the policy process, but the role of the food security advocacy coalition did not emerge until late in the research and so this avenue was not followed up in this iteration. I hope that my characterization of the nutrition policy process is nonetheless coherent without extended empirical attention to this set of actors.

Third, the elaboration of the distinct advocacy coalitions happened after my final visit to Zambia, so these could not be validated with members of the coalitions. Taking the findings back to the communities in question will be an important check of this work in future nutrition policy research in Zambia, particularly with the food security coalition, with whom I had fewer dealings during my time in Zambia. This may require elaborating actor mappings by individual stakeholders rather than by organization, where some organizations have members in both coalitions.

Finally, the call for attention to a rights-based approach emerged towards the end of the research when the lack of participation of the malnourished, the lack of accountability of government or service providers, and the division of the issues of hunger and malnutrition emerged through the final analysis. There was not therefore time to explore the relative merits of this approach with the very actors (communities, and the hungry or malnourished themselves) expected to benefit from the approach. This disconnect between a call for a participatory approach and the lack of consultation of communities about the research findings is a limitation of the work, and a research agenda to be pursued further.

7.4.4 Further work

Little nutrition policy process work has been published so far; it is an emerging field building largely on health policy process work to date. More work is needed on nutrition policy processes, particularly documenting more country experiences. Nutrition policy process work can explicitly learn from other work both in health policy process research (which is more extensive than in nutrition), and in agricultural policy process research (where nutrition can learn a lot both methodologically and geographically).

Further, not much nutrition policy process research so far is embedded in broader disciplines from which it could draw theory, such as political science or development studies. Future nutrition policy process work should seek to draw in this expertise, either through collaboration or through broader reading of these literatures, in order to apply theories and frameworks (as discussed above) that allow a move beyond descriptive studies and into theoretical and analytical realms, to improve generalizability of findings.

Even less nutrition policy process work has engaged with concepts common in broader development studies and policy science work, such as power and legitimacy. This has been called for both in the nutrition literature (Nisbett, Gillespie et al. 2014) and in broader public

health literature (Shiffman 2014, Shiffman, Schmitz et al. 2016). The concepts of power and legitimacy speak to the ethical dimensions of the policy process, therefore a piece of work still to be undertaken is to bring an ethics lens to nutrition policy process work, to bring fresh insights to the research currently being undertaken and embed it within a wider development framework focused on equity of process as well as outcomes.

Finally, the rights-based approach mooted above deserves further exploration. Building on normative rights work from the 1990s, this requires adding empirical investigation of the potential of rights-based approaches at country level and examining the views of government, civil society and affected communities, and their understanding of – or desire for – a right to nutrition approach to address intractable issues of hunger and various forms of malnutrition.

7.5 Conclusion

This research had the luxury of time to follow leads and explore different avenues, perspectives and theories, and thus became over the course of six years a rich and, I hope, compelling account of nutrition policy processes internationally and in Zambia. This work combines empirical analysis with theoretical ideas and personal reflection that I hope has the potential to be a useful contribution to my field, both broadening and deepening nutrition policy process research.

The study examined three levels of activity in the nutrition system – international, national, and local – to gather the thoughts and experiences of different actors in this system. The empirical findings from these three levels were interpreted in the light of theory from two very different but in the end complementary approaches: the anthropology of development, and the policy sciences. The study finds that it is possible, and even necessary, to critique the ideas and norms that are held by the international epistemic communities that set international policy agendas, in order to understand why these particular concepts have influence. It also finds that it is possible to understand policy processes for nutrition more fully than has so far been achieved in much nutrition literature through the application of multiple theories, and that these theories allow the generalization of findings from this case study to assess their relevance in other contexts: the study ultimately is about policy transfer, as explained by the presence of advocacy coalitions and their different manifestations of power, and these concepts can be investigated wherever the nutrition system reaches down from international to national level.

The study is also about the way that different people see the world and how that shapes what we do, reflecting on the often unspoken assumptions we hold and how these affect something as important as policy for nutrition; and if we happen to hold power, what we require others to do in the name of our beliefs. This matters because more reflection on our power, our assumptions and our actions as a nutrition community might make us more effective at addressing the issues that we see as unjust; because there might be better ways of framing or acting upon an issue that are more useful or more acceptable to those we purport to help; and because a lack of attention to the different framings and preferences that exist, particularly among those we frame as beneficiaries of our actions, diminishes our legitimacy to intervene in the first place. The empirical, theoretical and practical findings of this research have implications for both the process we follow and the outcomes we aim to achieve in addressing hunger and malnutrition, both of which remain significant injustices in Zambia and elsewhere.



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Annex 1: List of respondents interviewed

Year	Level	Name	Role	Organization
2011	Local	Daniel Motoka	District Livestock and Extension Officer	MAL Mumbwa
2011	Local	Julius Malipa	District Agriculture Coordinator	MAL Mumbwa
2011	Local	Chrisdah Minyoi	District Nutritionist	MoH Mumbwa
2011	Local	Mulonda Nalwendo	Senior Agricultural Officer	MAL Mumbwa
2011	Local	Presley Mushikita	District Livestock Coordinator	MAL Mumbwa
2011	Local	Dr Christopher Dube	District Medical Officer	MoH Mumbwa
2011	Local	Mr Siame	Technical Agriculture Officer	MAL Mumbwa
2011	Local	Annie Hackacha	Food and Nutrition Officer	MAL Mumbwa
2011	Local	Mr Chibuie	District Commissioner	Local government Mumbwa
2011	Local	Jacob Miti	District Social Welfare Officer	MCDMCH Mumbwa
2011	Local	Ms Chifunda	District Fisheries Officer	MAL Mumbwa
2011	Local	Ms Muahu Lungwebungu	District Planner	Local government Mumbwa
2013	Local	Subrata Chakrabarty	RAIN project manager to 2013	Concern
2014	Local	Chrisida Minyoyi	District Nutritionist	MoH Mumbwa
2014	Local	Jacob Miti	District Social Welfare Officer	MCDMCH Mumbwa
2014	National	Karen Mkuka	Head of food and nutrition division	MAL
2014	National	Bertha Munthali	Nutritionist	FAO
2014	National	William Chilufya	Coordinator	CSOSUN
2014	National	Cassim Masi	Director to 2014	NFNC
2014	National	Mofu Musonda	Deputy director	NFNC

2015	Local	Richard Mwape	RAIN project manager from 2013	Concern Worldwide
2015	Local	Dr Christopher Dube	District Medical Officer	MoH Mumbwa
2015	Local	Jacob Miti	Social Welfare Officer	MCDMCH Mumbwa
2015	Local	Mr Njovu	Organizer	Mumbwa nutrition groups
2015	Local	Joyce Kunda	District Nutritionist	MoH Mumbwa
2015	Local	John Madaliso	District nutrition coordinator	NFNC/SUN
2015	Local	Mr Kanyanta	Senior Agricultural Officer	MAL Mumbwa
2015	Local	Dr Christopher Dube	District Medical Officer	MoH Mumbwa
2015	Local	Benson and Rebecca	Technical officers	World Vision
2015	Local	Mr Mutiti	Statistician	MOE Mumbwa
2015	Local	Mr Mweetwa	Acting nutrition officer	MAL Mumbwa
2015	Local	Presley Mushikita	District Livestock Coordinator	MAL Mumbwa
2015	Local	Alex Nakachinda	Conservation farming officer	Conservation Farming Unit
2015	National	Dorothy Namuchimba and Josephine Myambe	Capacity/Communications	CARE (SUN)
2015	National	Mofu Musonda	Deputy director	NFNC
2015	National	Farayi Muzofa	Production manager	JAVA foods
2015	National	Faith Inchinto	School feeding coordinator	MOE / WFP
2015	National	Eustina Besa	Nutritionist	NFNC
2015	National	Robinah Mulenga	Director	NFNC
2015	National	Vincent Chawa	Nutritionist	NFNC
2015	National	Professor Chintu	Chair	NFNC Board
2015	National	Dorothy Nthani	Lecturer	UNZA
2015	National	Cassim Masi	Director to 2014	NFNC
2015	National	Mofu Musonda and Freddie Mubanga	Deputy directors	NFNC
2015	National	Dorothy Namuchimba and Mary Chibambula	Capacity / DUN Fund Team Leader	CARE (SUN)
2015	National	Ruth Sikazwe and Dominique Brunet	Nutritionists	UNICEF

2015	National	Highvie Hamdoudou	Member of Parliament	Government of Zambia
2015	National	Beatrice Kawana	Nutritionist	PATH
2015	National	Callum McGregor and Ralf Siwiti	Consultants	WFP
2015	National	Marjolein Mwanamwenge	Nutritionist	Concern Worldwide
2015	National	Chipo Mwela	Nutritionist	WHO
2015	National	Maureen Njando	Nutritionist	PAM
2015	International	Namukolo Covic	Nutrition researcher/capacity	IFPRI/NWU
2015	International	Joyce Njoro	Nutritionist	REACH
2015	International	Thahira Mustafa	Nutritionist	SUN Secretariat
2015	International	Silke Seco-Grutz	Nutritionist	DFID
2015	International	Ziauddin Hyder	Nutritionist	World Bank
2015	International	Patrizia Fracassi (published interview)	Nutrition policy advisor	SUN
2015	International	Alan Berg (published interview)	Nutrition researcher	World Bank, various
2015	International	Anna Lartey	Director	Nutrition division, FAO
2015	International	James Levinson	Nutrition professor	Tufts University
2015	International	John Mason	Nutrition professor	Tufts University
2015	International	Krasid Tontisirin	Professor of Pediatrics	Ramathibodi Hospital
2015	International	Leslie Elder	Senior Nutrition Specialist	World Bank
2015	International	Mark Manary	Professor of Pediatrics	Washington University
2015	International	Milla McLaughlan	Director, Human Nutrition Div.	Stellenbosch University
2015	International	Pedro Campo-Llopis	EU nutrition focal point	WHO
2015	International	Simon Maxwell	Development policy specialist	Various
2015	International	Victoria Quinn	Senior Vice President, Programs	HKI

Annex 2: Sample interview guide

Topic guide- national enabling environment⁴⁹

- *Respondent background*
 - Qualifications, work history, reasons for working in nutrition.
- *Attention to nutrition*
 - Has the way nutrition is seen in Zambia changed over recent years? How?
 - Why did any change emerge? Who or what influenced change?
 - Has any change been understood similarly by different stakeholders?
 - Have there been any key moments that changed things for nutrition (+/-)?
 - Have there been different 'eras' of nutrition thinking in Zambia? What?
- *Policy environment for nutrition*
 - How has the way nutrition is seen affected the policy or regulatory environment?
 - Why did it change this way, and not another way?
 - How is the policy and regulatory environment currently?
 - Is it supportive or hindering to their own aims for nutrition?
 - In which ways?
 - How are policies supposed to be enacted?
 - Who is supposed to do what?
 - Is this the way it works in practice?
- *Commitment for nutrition*
 - Have any concrete actions been undertaken for nutrition? (*eg. Programs*)
 - Which actions; by whom? *NB. levels- national to local; gov vs non-gov*
 - What are challenges to implementing actions for nutrition?
 - Is there enough money? The right people?
 - Who is working for nutrition, and who is dragging?
 - Is anyone keeping track of the situation? (*monitoring, review*)
 - Who is accountable if things are not done?
 - How is this tracked? Are there incentives or sanctions?
- Are there any other issues around nutrition policy and governance in Zambia that you would like to highlight?

⁴⁹ Questions are based on frameworks assessing agenda setting (Shiffman and Smith 2007) and commitment (Heaver 2005) in policy processes.

Annex 3: Sample NetMap guide

Net-Map Interview Guide: National environment

Pre-Interview

- Write the overall question at the top of a piece of flip chart paper.
- Write the date and the name and job title of the respondents on the paper.
- Write the link types in the corner of the flipchart page, using the colour to correspond with links.

Overall question:

**Who has influence in nutrition policy and practice in Zambia,
and how are they accountable?**

Introduction

Thank you for participating today. This process will form part of research undertaken for the Stories of Change project at IFPRI. The goal is to understand the nutrition policy and implementation process in Zambia, to find lessons that might be applied here and in other places. I also hope that the results we generate here together will be useful to you in aiding your overview of who is involved in nutrition in Zambia and how, for furthering your work as nutrition champions.

The overall question for the research is: Who has influence in nutrition policy and practice in Zambia, and how are they accountable? Within this, I am hoping to understand which stakeholders are involved in creating and implementing policies which affect nutrition in Zambia, how these stakeholders interact, who is accountable to who, and how much influence they have to support their aims.

We will be using a process called Net-Map. Net-Map is an interview technique that examines the goals, perspectives and influence of various stakeholders, and looks at the different ways in which these stakeholders interact with each other. We will start by listing all the actors involved in this issue, then determine how they are linked, examine how influential each actor is in the development of any plans or projects. A particular feature of Net-Map is that it allows us to look at how things are actually done and not only what is written in formal documents. This is why we need the insight of people like you, who are part of the process and know it from the inside.

All responses are strictly confidential, and any results will be fully de-personalized before being used in any research.

Step 1: Determine actors

First, we need to determine which stakeholders are involved in creating and implementing policies which affect nutrition in Zambia. Stakeholders could include those people or organizations working in government on issues that affect nutrition; those outside of government seeking to influence government policy and action; those providing funds for aspects of nutrition; and those unaware or supportive of competing priorities. We will start by laying out actors around the SUN hubs, to aid memory, but you can move actors as you see fit. Start with those stakeholders who seem to be most active in nutrition policy. We can go back at any time and add more stakeholders as you think of them.

Which stakeholders are involved in creating and implementing policies which affect nutrition in Zambia?

- Prompt the interview partners by asking for stakeholders involved in nutrition policy and implementation. Each category of stakeholder gets a different colour card:
 - Government **Green**
 - Donor..... **Yellow**
 - Private sector..... **Blue**
 - Civil society..... **Orange**
 - National/International
 - Other..... **Pink**
- Write on actor cards as they list them. We will focus on organizations rather than individuals, but prompt for names and/or job titles if key individuals are mentioned within organizations, and note their names next to the organization with a brief note.
- Place actors on flipchart sheet, around SUN hubs- but put those they deem more active closer to the centre, to facilitate the drawing of links.
- Go over the board at the end, recap the actors, and make any additions/modifications.

Step 2: Draw links between actors

Each of these actors is linked to some of the others in different ways: Some may give or receive funds; some may work together; some may share information; and some may advocate to others. The link we are particularly interested in today is 'accountability'- who is accountable to whom. Before we proceed, we therefore need to define accountability and agree on a definition.

- Lead a discussion around the definition of 'accountability', and ensure consensus before moving on. A common definition of accountability, for your reference, is: 'The obligation of an individual or organization to account for its activities, accept responsibility for them, and to disclose the results in a transparent manner.'

We will draw links between actors who are accountable to each other, with arrows to show the direction of accountability. We will only draw links if you know that they exist, and not if you guess or think there should be a link. We can go back at any time and add more links as you think of them.

Who is accountable to whom?

- Prompt the interview partners by asking for accountability links between actors.
- Draw lines with arrows between actors which are accountable to each other. These could be one-way or two-way arrows.
- You may need to add actors at this point, if they have forgotten any (commonly, 'community' is forgotten- If community is neglected then we can bring it up and ask why it was missed. If the group agree that community is involved then we can explore the linkages. It will be interesting to interrogate the notion of "accountability to the community").
- You can also break organizations down into smaller units if necessary.
- If it seems like the interviewees are not clear about the meaning of the links, you can give examples or ask the respondent to give examples.
- Go over the board at the end, recap the links, and make any additions/modifications.

Step 3: Attribute influence

As a final step, we want to know how much influence each of these actors has over nutrition policy and practice. Before we proceed, we therefore need to define influence and agree on a definition.

- Lead a discussion around the definition of ‘influence’, and ensure consensus before moving on. A common definition of influence, for your reference, is: ‘the capacity or power of persons or things to be a compelling force on or produce effects on the actions, behaviour, opinions, etc. of someone or something, or the effect itself.’ Ways of influencing include, but are not limited to: Formal command; providing funding; giving new information; having a respected voice or opinion; strength in numbers....

We can represent the influence that each stakeholder has on an issue using disks to assign levels- the more disks for a stakeholder, the more influence they have according to you. Think about the influence you think each stakeholder has in achieving their aims, and assign them an appropriate level of influence.

How strongly does each actor influence nutrition policy and practice in Zambia, according to their aims?

- Starting with the most influential actor, place disks next to actor cards. Start with 5 for the most influential actor that comes immediately to mind (though subsequent actors may in the end be assigned more disks), with relative influence more important than absolute numbers. Make changes as you go along if required.
- When finished, review the entire board, starting by stating the influence level of the actor with the highest level all the way down to the lowest. Ask some follow-up questions if relevant:
 - *I see you have put this actor on the highest tower. Why? Where does his/her influence come from?*
 - *You say that these two have the same level of influence. What happens if they disagree? Is their influence based on the same grounds? Does it have the same range?*
 - *You have linked this actor to so many others, but you say he doesn’t have much influence— why is that so?*

ENDING THE INTERVIEW

- Review the entire board, and let the respondent make any changes
Are there any other issues that are important to highlight regarding the stakeholders, their interactions, and their influence over Zambian policy and programs?
- Thank the participants for their time, and explain next steps in the research process.